Manifestations of Karma

Dr. Rudolf Steiner

Table of Contents

1. The Nature and Significance of Karma in the Personal and Individual, and in Humanity, the Earth and the Universe
2. Karma and the Animal Kingdom
3. Karma in Relation to Disease and Health
4. The Curability and Incurability of Diseases in Relation to Karma
5. Natural and Accidental Illness in Relationship to Karma
6. The Relationships Between Karma and Accidents
7. Forces of Nature, Volcanic Eruptions, Earthquakes and Epidemics in Relation to Karma
8. Karma of the Higher Beings
9. Karmic Effects of Our Experiences as Men and Women. Death and Birth in Relationship to Karma
10. Free Will and Karma in the Future of Human Evolution
11. Individual and Human Karma. Karma of the Higher Beings

1. The Nature and Significance of Karma in the Personal and Individual, and in Humanity, the Earth and the Universe

IN this course of lectures we shall deal with certain questions in the realms of Spiritual Science which play a great part in life. From the different lectures which in the course of time have been given, you will have learned that Spiritual Science should not be an abstract theory, not a mere doctrine or teaching, but a source of life and aptitude for life. It only fulfils its task when by the knowledge it is able to give, it pours into our souls something which makes life richer and more comprehensible, strengthening our souls and invigorating them. When the anthroposophist sets before him the ideal we have just summed up in a few words, and then looks around him to see how far he can put it into practice, he will perhaps receive a by no means gratifying impression. For if we consider impartially what the world thinks it ‘knows’ nowadays, and what leads men to this or that feeling or action, we might say all this is so very different from Anthroposophical ideas and ideals, that the Anthroposophist is quite unable to influence life directly by what he has acquired from Spiritual Science. This would however be a very superficial view

of the situation, not taking into consideration what we ourselves have gained from our world conception. If those powers which we acquire through anthroposophy really become strong enough, they will find a way to work in the world; but if nothing is ever done to make these powers increasingly stronger, then indeed will it be impossible for them to influence the world.

But there is something else which may console us, so to speak, even if after the above considerations we feel hopeless, and that is just what should come to us as the result of the observations which will be set forth in this course of lectures; studies concerning what is called human karma and karma in general. For every hour that we spend here we shall see more clearly that nothing must be spared to bring about the possibility of influencing life by means of anthroposophy; moreover, if we ourselves earnestly and steadfastly believe in karma, we must have confidence that karma itself will dictate to us what we shall each, sooner or later, have to do for our own forces. If we think we are not yet able to make use of the powers we have acquired by our conception of the world, we shall see that we have not sufficiently strengthened those powers for karma to make it possible for us to influence the world by means of them. So that in these

lectures there will not only be a number of facts about karma, but with every hour our confidence in karma will be more fully awakened, and we shall have the certainty that, when the time comes, be it to-morrow, or the day after, or many years hence, our karma will bring us the tasks which we, as Anthroposophists, have to perform. Karma will reveal itself to us as a teaching which does not tell us merely what is the connection between this or that in the world, but we can, with the revelations it brings to us, make life more satisfactory, and at the same time raise it to a higher standard.

But if karma is really to do this we must go more deeply into the law referred to, and into its action in the universe. In this case, it is to a certain extent necessary that I should do something unusual for me in dealing with questions of Spiritual Science, namely, to give a definition, an explanation of a word; for usually definitions do not lead very far. In our considerations we generally begin by the presentation of facts, and if these facts are grouped and arranged in the proper way, the conceptions and ideas follow of themselves; but if we were to follow a similar course with regard to the comprehensive questions which we have to discuss during the next few lectures, we should need much more time than is at our disposal.

So in this case, in order to make ourselves comprehensible, we must give, if not exactly a definition, at least some description of the conception which is to occupy us for some time. Definitions are for the purpose of making clear what is meant when one uses such and such a word. In this way, a description of the idea of ‘karma’ will be given, so that we may know what is understood when in future the word ‘karma’ is used.

From the various lectures, every one of us will have formed for himself an idea of what karma is. It is a very abstract idea of karma to call it ‘the Spiritual Law of Causes,’ the law by which certain effects follow certain causes found in spiritual life. This idea of karma is too abstract, because it is on the one hand too narrow and on the other much too comprehensive. If we wish to conceive of karma as a ‘Law of Causes,’ we must connect it with what is otherwise known in the world as the ‘Law of Causality,’ the Law of Cause and Effect. Let us be clear about what we understand to be the law of causes in the general way before we speak of spiritual facts and events.

It is very often emphasised nowadays by external science, that its own real importance lies in the fact that it is founded on the universal law of causes, and

that everywhere it traces certain effects to their respective causes. But people are certainly much less clear as to how this linking of cause and effect takes place. For you will still find in books of the present day which are supposed to be clever and to explain ideas in quite a philosophical manner, such expressions as the following: ‘An effect is that which follows from a cause.’ But to say this is to lose sight entirely of the facts. In the case of a warm sunbeam falling on a metal plate and making it warmer than before, material science would speak of cause and effect in the ordinary way. But can we claim that the effect — the warming of the metal plate — follows from the cause of the warm sunbeam? If the warm sunbeam had this effect already *within* it why is it that it warms the metal plate only when it comes into contact with it? Hence, in the world of phenomena, in the inanimate world which is all around us, it is necessary, if an effect is to follow a cause, that something should encounter this cause. Unless this takes place one cannot speak of an effect following upon a cause. This preliminary remark, philosophical and abstract though it apparently sounds, is by no means superfluous; for if real progress is to be made in anthroposophical matters we must get into the habit of being extremely accurate in our ideas instead of being casual as people sometimes are in other branches of knowledge.

Now we must not speak of karma in a way similar to that of the sunray warming a sheet of metal. Certainly there is causality. The connection between cause and effect is there, but we should never obtain a true idea of karma if we spoke of it only in that way. Hence, we cannot use the term karma in speaking of a simple relation between effect and cause.

We may now go a little further and form for ourselves a somewhat higher idea of the connection between cause and effect. For instance if we have a bow, and we bend it and shoot off an arrow with it, there is an effect caused by the bending of the bow; but we can no more speak of the effect of the shot arrow in connection with its cause as ‘karma’ than in the foregoing case. But if we consider something else in connection with this incident, we shall, to a certain extent, get nearer to the idea of karma, even if we do not then quite grasp it. For example, we may reflect that the bow, if often bent, becomes slack in time. So, from what the bow does and from what happens to it, there will follow not only an effect which shows itself externally, but also one which will react upon the bow itself. Through the frequent bending of the bow something happens to the bow itself. Something which happens through the bending of the bow reacts, so to speak, on the bow. Thus an effect is obtained which

reacts on the object by which the effect itself was caused. This comes nearer to the idea of karma. Unless a result is produced which reacts upon the being or thing producing it, unless there is this peculiar reacting effect upon the being which caused it, the idea of karma is not understood. We thus get somewhat nearer to the idea when it is clear to us that the effects caused by the thing or being must recoil upon that thing or being itself; nevertheless we must not call the slackening of the bow through frequent bending, the ‘karma’ of the bow, for the following reason. If we have had the bow for three or four weeks and have often bent it so that after this time it becomes slack, then we really have in the slack bow something quite different from the tense bow of four weeks before. Thus when the reacting effect is of such a kind that it makes the thing or the being something quite different, we cannot yet speak of ‘karma.’ We may speak of karma only when the effects which react upon a being find the same being to react upon, or at any rate that being, in a certain sense, unaltered. Thus we have again come a little nearer to the idea of karma; but if we describe it in this way we obtain only a very abstract conception of it.

If we want to grasp this idea abstractly, we cannot do better than by expressing it in the way we have

just done; but one thing more must be added to this idea of karma. If the effect reacts upon the being immediately, that is, if cause and reacting effect are simultaneous, we can hardly then call that karma, for in this case the being from whom the effect proceeded would have actually intended to bring about that result directly. He would, therefore, foresee the effect and would perceive all the elements leading to it. When this is the case we cannot really call it karma. For instance, we should not call it karma in the case of a person performing an act by which he intends to bring about certain results, and who then obtains the desired result in accordance with his purpose. That is to say, between the cause and the effect there must be something hidden from the person when he sets the cause in motion; so that though this connection is really there, it was not actually designed by the person himself. If this connection has not been intended by him then the reason for a connection between cause and effect must be looked for elsewhere than in the intentions of the person in question. That is to say, this reason must be determined by a certain fixed law. Thus karma also includes the facts that the connection between cause and effect is determined by a law independent of whether or not there be direct intention on the part of the being concerned.

We have now grouped together a few principles which may elucidate for us the idea of karma, but we must include all these principles in the conception of karma, and not limit it to an abstract definition. Otherwise we shall not be able to comprehend the manifestations of karma in the different spheres of life. We must now first seek for the manifestations of karma where we first meet with them — in individual human lives.

Can we find anything of the sort in individual lives, and when can we find what we have just presented in our explanation of the idea of karma? We should find something of the sort if, for example, we experienced something in our life about which we could say. ‘This experience which has come to us stands in a certain relationship to a previous event in which we took part, and which we ourselves caused.’ Let us try in the first place, by mere observation of life, to make sure whether this relationship exists. We will take the purely external point of view. He who does not do so can never arrive at the recognition of a law of inter-dependence in life, any more than a man who has never observed the collision of two billiard balls can understand the elasticity which makes them rebound. Observation of life can lead us to the perception of a

law of inter-dependence. Let us take a definite example.

Suppose that a young man in his nineteenth year, who by some accident is obliged to give up a profession which until then had seemed to be marked out for him, and who up to that time had pursued a course of study to prepare him for that profession, through some misfortune to his parents was compelled to give up this profession and, at the age of eighteen, to become a business man. An impartial observer of such an occurrence in life, like the student in physics observing the impact of the elastic balls will probably find that the business experiences into which the young man has been driven will at first have a stimulating effect upon him, so that he will carry out his duties, learn something from them, and perhaps even attain special excellence in his work. But after some time one can also observe another condition entering in, a certain boredom or discontent. This discontent will not be manifested immediately. If the change of calling took place in the youth’s nineteenth year, probably the next few years would pass quietly, though about his twenty-fourth year it would become evident that something apparently inexplicable had taken root in his soul. Looking more closely into the matter we are likely to find, if the case is not

complicated, that the explanation of the boredom arising five years after the change of calling must be sought for in his thirteenth or fourteenth year; for the causes of such a phenomenon are generally to be sought for at about the same period of time before the change of calling as the occurrence we have been describing took place afterwards. The man in question when he was a school-boy of thirteen, five years before the change of vocation, might have experienced something in his soul which gave him a feeling of inner happiness. Supposing that no change of profession had taken place, then that to which the youth had accustomed himself in his thirteenth year would have shown itself in later life and would have borne fruit. Then, however, came the change which at first interested the young man and so possessed his soul that he repressed, as it were, what had before occupied it; but though repressed for a certain time, it would on that account gain a peculiar strength. This may be compared with the squeezing of an india-rubber ball which we can compress to a certain point where it resists, and if it were allowed to spring back it would do so in proportion to the force with which we have compressed it. Such experiences as we have just indicated, which the young man went through in his thirteenth year, and which grew stronger until the change of profession, might also in a certain sense be

driven into the background. But after a time a certain resistance arises in the soul and one can then see how this resistance becomes strong enough to produce an effect. Because the soul lacks what it would have had if the change of profession had not taken place, that which had been repressed now begins to assert itself, appearing as boredom and discontent with its surroundings.

Here then we have the case of a man who experiences something or did something in his thirteenth or fourteenth year and who later did something — changed his occupation, and we see that these causes later on in their effect react on the same person. In such a case we should have to apply the idea of karma primarily to the individual life of a man. We ought not to object to this because we have known cases in which nothing of the kind could be traced. That may be, but no student of physics examining the laws of the velocity of a falling stone would say that the law was incorrect because the stone was deflected by a blow. We must learn to observe in the right way, and to exclude those phenomena which have nothing to do with the establishment of the law. Certainly such a young man, who supposing nothing else intervenes, experiences boredom in his twenty-fourth year as the result of impressions received in his thirteenth year,

would not have been thus bored if, for example, in the meantime he had married. But we are here dealing with something which has no influence on the fundamental truth of the principle. What is important is that we must find the real factors from which we can establish a law. Observation pure and simple is insufficient; only methodical observation will lead us to the recognition of the law; and therefore if we want to study the law of karma, we must make these methodical observations in the right way.

Let us start, then, with the study of the karma of one special person. Fate deals a man in his twenty-fifth year a heavy blow, which causes him pain and suffering. Now, if our observations are of such a nature that we merely say ‘This heavy blow has just broken into his life and has filled it with pain and suffering,’ we shall never arrive at an understanding of karmic connections. But if we go a little further and observe the life of this person in his fiftieth year, after he has passed through such a trouble in his twenty-fifth year, we shall perhaps come to a different conclusion which we might be able to express thus: ‘The man whom we are now observing has become industrious and active, leading an excellent life.’ Now, let us look further back into his life. When he was twenty we find that he was a good-for-nothing fellow, and thoroughly idle. At

twenty-five this trouble came upon him, and had he not met with this blow we may now say that he would have remained a good-for-nothing. In this case the severe blow of fate was the cause that at the age of fifty we now find him an industrious and excellent man.

Such a fact teaches us that we should be mistaken if we considered the blow of fate at the age of twenty-five was merely an effect. We cannot just ask what caused it, and stop at that. But if we consider the blow not as an effect at the end of the phenomena which preceded it, but place it rather at the beginning of the subsequent events, and consider it as a cause, then we learn that we must entirely and essentially change the judgments we have formed by our feelings and perceptions with regard to this blow of fate. We shall very likely be grieved if we think of it only as an effect, but if we think of it as the cause of what happens later on, we shall probably be glad and feel pleasure over it. For we can say that thanks to the fateful blow the man who experienced it has become a decent fellow, and a useful member of society. So we see that our attitude is essentially different in so far as we consider an event in life as cause or as effect. Therefore it is of importance from which point of view we regard an event happening to a man — whether we consider it

as a cause or as an effect. It is true that if we start our investigations at the time of the painful events, we cannot then clearly perceive the direct effect, but if we have arrived at the law of karma by the observation of similar cases, that law can itself say to us: ‘an event is painful perhaps now because it appears to us merely as the result of what has happened previously, but it can also be looked upon as the starting point of what is to follow.’ Then we can foresee the blow of fate as the starting point and the cause of the results, and this places the matter in quite a different light.

Thus the law of karma itself may be a source of consolation if we accustom ourselves to set an event not only at the end, but at the beginning of a series of events. This consolation exists only if we learn to study life methodically, and to place things in the right relationship to one another as cause and effect. If we carry out these observations thoroughly, we shall notice events in the life of a man which take place with a certain regularity; others, again, appear quite irregularly in the same life. He who observes human life carefully — not simply in a superficial way — may find remarkable connections in it. Unfortunately, the phenomena of human life are at present observed for only short periods of time, hardly even for a few years;

people are not accustomed to connect what has happened after a long period of time, with what may have happened previously as the cause. There are very few at the present day who study the beginning and the end of a man’s life in their relationship to each other; nevertheless this relationship is extraordinarily instructive.

Supposing we have brought up a child during the first seven years of his life without having done what generally happens, that is, without starting out in the belief that if a man is to lead a good and useful life he must unconditionally fulfil our own ideas of a good man. For in such a case we should train the child as strictly as possible in the behaviour which, according to our own ideas, is that of a good and useful man. But if at the outset we recognise that a man may be good and useful in many different ways, and that there is no necessity to determine in which of these ways the child with his individual talents is to become a good and useful man — in this case we would say: ‘Whatever may be my ideas of a good and useful man, this child is to become one through having his best talents brought out, and these I must first discover. What matter the rules by which I myself feel bound? The child himself must feel the necessity to do this or that. If I wish to develop the child according to his

individual talents, I must try first to develop tendencies latent in him and draw them out, so that he may above all realise them and act in accordance with them.’

Thus we see that there are two quite different ways of influencing a child in the first seven years of its life. If we now look at the child in its later life it will be a long time before the essential effects are manifested of what we have in this way brought into the first years of its life. Observation of life reveals to us that the actual results of what was put into the child’s soul in its earliest years does not manifest itself until the very evening of life. A man may possess to the very end of his life an active mind, if he has been, as a child, educated in this way; that is, if the living, inherent tendencies of his soul have been observed and naturally developed. If we have drawn out and developed his innate powers we shall see the fruits in the evening of his life displayed as a rich soul-life. On the other hand, in a starved and impoverished soul and a corresponding weakly old age (for we shall see later on how a starved soul reacts on the body), is manifested that we have done wrong in our treatment of a person is in earliest childhood. This is something in human life which in a certain way is so regular that

it is applicable to everyone as a connection between cause and effect.

The same connection may also be found in the intermediate stages of life, and we will now draw attention to this. The way in which we deal with a child from his seventh to his fourteenth year produces effects in that part of his life which precedes the final stage, and thus we see cause and effect working in cycles. What existed as cause in the earliest years comes out as effect in the latest ones. But in addition to these causes and effects in individual lives which run their course in cycles, there is what may be described as a straight line law.

In our example which showed how the thirteenth year influenced the twenty-third, we see how cause and effect are so connected with human life that what a man has experienced leads to after-effects which in their turn react upon him. Thus karma is fulfilled in individual lives. But we shall not arrive at an explanation of human life if we study only the connection of cause and effect in the life of a single individual. How the idea now brought forward is to be further proved and carried out we shall show in further lectures; at present we shall only briefly touch upon what is already acknowledged, that Spiritual Science

teaches how the life of a man between birth and death is the repetition of previous human existences.

If we now seek for the chief characteristic of the life between birth and death, we can describe this as being the extension of one and the same consciousness (at any rate in its essentials) throughout the whole life-time. If you call to mind the earliest parts of your life, you will say: ‘There is indeed, a point of time when my recollections of life begin, which does not coincide with my birth, but which comes somewhat later.’ Everyone who is not an initiate will allow this, and he will say, this is as far back as his consciousness extends. There is, indeed, something very remarkable in the period of time between birth and the beginning of this recollection of life, and we shall return to it again as it will throw light upon important matters. Except then for this period between birth and the beginning of memory we can say that life between birth and death is characterised by the fact of one consciousness extending throughout that period of time.

In ordinary life a person does not seek a connection between cause and effect, because he takes only short periods into consideration. So when something happens to him in later life, he does not look for the

cause in his earlier life; yet he could do so if he were only observant enough and investigated everything. He could do it with the consciousness which as memory-consciousness is at his disposal, and if through recollection he strove to make the connection, in a karmic sense, between earlier and later events, he would arrive at the following conclusion: ‘I see, of course, that certain experiences that come to me would not have occurred unless this or that had happened to me in earlier life, and I must now suffer for the wrong way in which I was brought up.’ But if he also looks into the connection, not for what he has done wrong, but for the wrong done against him, that will be a help to him. He will more easily find ways and means to neutralise the harm which has been done to him. The recognition of such a connection between cause and effects in our different periods of life which we can scan with ordinary consciousness may be of the utmost use to us in life; for if we acquire this knowledge we may perhaps do something else. Without doubt if a person having arrived at the age of eighty looks back and sees that the causes of the things happening to him now are to be found in his earliest childhood it will then perhaps be very difficult for him to remedy the ill that has been done to him; and if he then begins to study the teaching it will not help him very much. But if he lets himself be taught

before, and looks back in, say, his fortieth year on the wrongs that have been done to him, he might then have time to take measures against them.

Thus we see that we must be taught not entirely by our own individual life karma, but by the law of inter-dependence which karma as a whole signifies. This may be very useful in our life. What should a man do who in his fortieth year attempts to avert the effect of wrongs done to him, or wrongs which he himself did in his twelfth year? He will do everything to avert the consequences of his own misdeeds or those of others towards him. He will to a certain extent replace by another the result which would inevitably have taken place had he not intervened. The knowledge of what happened in his twelfth year will lead him to a definite action in his fortieth year, which he would not have taken unless he had known that this or that had happened in his twelfth year. What then, has the man done by looking back at his early life? He has through the knowledge thus attained, allowed a definite result to follow a cause. He has willed the cause and has brought it about. This shows now how, in the line of karmic consequences, our will can intervene and bring about something which takes the place of the karmic effects which would otherwise have followed. If we consider such a case in which a person has quite

consciously brought about a connection between cause and effect in life, we could conclude that in this case karma or the laws of karma have penetrated his consciousness, and he has himself, in a certain way brought about the karmic effect. Let us now apply the same reflections to what we know about the life of man in his different reincarnations upon earth. The consciousness of which we have just spoken which extends, with the exception mentioned, throughout the period between birth and death, is due to the fact that man is able to use his brain as an instrument. When a man steps through the gate of death, a different sort of consciousness comes into play — one that is independent of the brain and works under essentially different conditions. We also know that this consciousness, which lasts until a new birth, can look back over all that has been done by the man in his life between birth and death. In this period between birth and death we must first form the intention to look back at any wrongs which have been done to us, or which we have done, if we wish to counteract these wrongs karmically. After death, in looking back over life, we see what we have done wrong or otherwise; and at the same time we see how these deeds have affected ourselves; we see how, to a certain action, our characters have been improved or debased. If we have brought suffering to anyone, we have sunk and

become of less value; we are less perfect, so to speak. Now, if we look back after death we see numerous events of the sort, and we say to ourselves: ‘I have deteriorated.’ Then in the consciousness after death, the will and power arise to win back, when the opportunities occur, the value we have lost; the will, that is to say, to make compensation for every wrong committed. Thus between death and re-birth the tendency and intention is formed to make good what has been done wrong, in order to regain the standard of perfection a man should have — a standard which has been lowered by the deed referred to.

Then the man returns once more to life on earth. His consciousness is altered again. He does not recollect the time between death and rebirth, or the resolutions to make compensation. But the intention remains within him, and although he does not know that he must do such and such a thing to compensate such and such an act, yet he is impelled by the power within him to make the compensation. Now we can form an idea of what happens when a man in his twentieth year suffers bitter trial. With the consciousness he possesses between birth and death, he will be depressed by the trial; but if he could remember his resolutions made between death and rebirth, he would be able to trace the power which

drove him into the position in which he suffered the trial, because he felt that only by passing through it would he win back the degree of perfection which he has lost and was now to regain. When, therefore, the ordinary consciousness says, ‘The trial is there, and you are suffering from it,’ it sees only the trouble itself, and not the effect it produces; but the other consciousness which can look back upon all the time between death and rebirth, sees the intentional seeking for the trial or other misfortune.

This, indeed, is actually shown to us when we look out over a man’s life from a higher standpoint. Then we can see that fateful events occur in human life which are not the results of causes in the individual life itself, but are the effects of causes perceived in another state of consciousness, namely, the consciousness we had before re-birth. If we grasp these ideas thoroughly, we shall see that in the first place we have a consciousness which extends over the time between birth and death, which we call the consciousness of the ‘Personality.’ And then we see that there is a consciousness which works beyond birth and death of which man in his ordinary consciousness knows nothing, but which nevertheless works in the same way as the ordinary consciousness. We have, therefore, shown first of all how anyone may

take over his own karma, and in his fortieth year make some compensation so that the causes of his twelfth year may not come to effect. Thus he takes karma into his personal consciousness. If, however, the man is driven somewhere where he has to suffer pain in order to compensate for something and to become a better man, this also proceeds from the man himself; not from his personal consciousness, but from a more comprehensive consciousness which operates during the period between death and rebirth. The entity included in this consciousness we will call the ‘individuality,’ and this consciousness, which is being continually interrupted by the ‘personal consciousness,’ we will call the ‘individual consciousness.’ Thus we see karma operative in relation to the individual human being.

In spite of this, we shall not understand human life if we only follow the sequence of phenomena as we have just done, if we only fix our attention on what man has within him in the way of cause and the effects which concern him. We need only bring forward a simple case to make things clearer, and we shall at once see that we cannot understand human life if we take into consideration only what has already been said. Let us take a discoverer or an inventor, for example, Columbus, or the inventor of the steam-engine, or any

others: in the discovery there is a distinct action, a distinct achievement. If we examine the action and seek for the cause why the man did it, we shall always find such causes by searching along the lines just pointed out. We shall find in his individual and personal karma the reasons why Columbus sailed to America and why he determined to do so at just that particular time. But now we might ask if the cause must be sought for only in his personal and individual karma; and is the action only to be considered as an effect for the individuality working in Columbus. That Columbus discovered America had certain consequences for him. He rose by doing so, and became more perfect, and this will show itself in the development of his individuality in succeeding lives. But what effects has this achievement had on other men? Must it not also be considered as a cause which affected the lives of countless human beings?

This, again, is still rather an abstract consideration of such a question which we could study much more deeply if we could observe human life over long periods of time. Let us consider human life in the Egyptian-Chaldean age which preceded the Greco-Latin. If we examine the peculiarities of this age, especially with regard to what it has given to mankind, and what mankind then learnt in it, we shall

see something curious. If we compare this epoch with our own, we shall perceive that what is happening in our own time is connected with what happened in the Egyptian-Chaldean civilisation. The Greco-Latin lies between the two. In our time certain things would not happen unless other things had happened in the Egyptian-Chaldean times. If present-day natural science has brought about certain results, it has certainly done so by means of powers which have unfolded and developed out of the souls of men. The human souls who worked in our time were also incarnated in man in the Egyptian-Chaldean age, and at that time they underwent certain experiences without which they would not be able to accomplish what they do to-day. If the pupils of the old Egyptian temple priests had not learned in Egyptian astrology about the relations existing between the heavenly bodies, they would not later on have been able to penetrate into the secrets of the world, nor would certain souls in the present age have possessed the abilities to explore the regions of the heavens. For instance, how did Kepler arrive at his discoveries? He did so because within him there was a soul who in the Egyptian-Chaldean times had acquired the forces necessary for the discoveries which he was to make in the fifth age. It fills us with inner satisfaction to see in certain souls a realisation arising out of the fact that

the germs of what they are now doing were laid in the past. Kepler, one of the men who has played a most important part in the investigation of the laws of the universe says of himself, ‘Yes, it is I who have robbed the golden vessels of the Egyptians to make an offering to my God far removed from Egyptian bounds. If you will forgive me, I will rejoice, but if you blame me I must bear it; here I throw the dice and I write this book. What matter if it is read to-day or later — even if centuries must elapse before it is read! God himself had to wait six thousand years for the one who recognised his work.’

Here we have a sporadic memory rising in Kepler of what he received as a germ for the work which he, in his personal life as Kepler, accomplished. Hundreds of similar cases might be given. But we see in Kepler something more than the mere manifestation of effects which were the result of causes in a previous incarnation — we see a manifestation which has its significance for the whole of mankind — a manifestation of something which was equally important for the humanity in a previous epoch. We see how a person is placed in the special position in order to do something for the whole of mankind. We see that not only in individual lives, but in the whole of humanity, there are connections between cause

and effect, which stretch over wide periods of time, and we can deduce that the karmic law of the individual will intersect the laws which we may call ‘karmic laws of humanity.’ Sometimes this intersection is only slightly perceptible. Imagine what would have happened to our astronomy if the telescope had not been discovered at that particular time. If we look back at the history of the telescope we see of what tremendous importance the discovery has been. Now it is well known that the discovery of the telescope was made in the following way: Some children were playing with lenses in an optician’s workshop and by chance, as one might say, they had so placed the optical lenses that someone hit upon the idea of employing this arrangement to make something like a telescope. Think how deeply you must search in order to arrive at the individual karma of the children and the karma of humanity which led to the discovery at that particular moment. Try to think the two facts out together, and you will see in what a remarkable manner the karma of single individuals and the karma of the whole of humanity intercept and are interwoven. You must admit that the whole of the development of mankind would have been different if such and such a thing had not come to pass when it did.

To ask such a question as: — ‘What would have happened to the Roman Empire if the Greeks had not beaten off the Persian attack in the Persian wars at a particular time?’ — is often quite futile, but to ask: ‘How did it happen that the Persian war ended in this way?’ is by no means futile. If we follow up this question and seek an answer we shall see that in the East, definite results came about because there were despotic rulers who only wanted something for themselves, and who, to gain their ends, combined with the sacrificial priests. The whole organisation of the Eastern State was at that time necessary for any given thing to be accomplished and this arrangement brought with it all the trouble which resulted in the Greeks — a differently constituted people — defeating the Eastern attack at a critical moment. How then must we consider the karma of those who worked in Greece to resist the Persian attack? We shall find much that is personal in the karma of those in question, but we shall also find that their personal karma is linked with the karma of nations and of humanity, so that we are justified in saying that the karma of humanity placed these particular persons in that particular place at that time. We see here the karma of humanity affecting the individual karma, and we must ask how these things are interwoven. But we

may go still further, and consider yet another connection by means of Spiritual Science.

We can look back to a time in the evolution of our earth when there was as yet no mineral kingdom. The evolution of the earth was preceded by the Saturn, Sun and Moon evolutions, where as yet there was no mineral kingdom in our sense of the word. It was on this earth that our minerals first took on their present forms. But because the mineral kingdom became separated in the course of the earth’s evolution, it will remain a separate kingdom to the end. Before that, men, animals, and plants had developed without the mineral kingdom. In order that later the other kingdoms might make further progress, they had to separate the mineral kingdom out of themselves, but after they had done this, they could only develop on a planet which had a firm mineral form. They could have developed in no other way than this, if we admit that the formation of a mineral kingdom took place in the way we have said. The mineral kingdom is there, and the subsequent fate of the other kingdoms depends on the existence of this mineral kingdom which was formed within our earth in remote ages of antiquity. So something happened connected with the fact of the formation of the mineral kingdom which must be taken into account in all the later evolutions of the

earth. What follows as the result of the origin of the mineral kingdom finds its fulfilment in later periods of what happened in earlier ones. On the earth is fulfilled what was on the earth prepared long ago. There is a connection between what happened earlier and what came to pass later — but this is also a connection which in its effects reacts upon the being which caused it. Men, animals, and plants have separated from the mineral kingdom, and the latter reacts upon them! Thus we see that it is possible to speak of the karma of the earth.

Finally, we can bring to light something, the elements of which we can find in the general principles described in my book, *Occult Science*. We know that certain beings remained at the stage of the old Moon evolution and that these beings did so for the purpose of giving to human beings certain definite qualities. Not only beings, but also substances, remained from the old Moon-time of the earth. At the Moon stage there remained behind beings who influenced our earth’s existence as luciferic beings. As a result of this, certain effects are manifested on our earth of which the causes are to be found in the Moon life. But from the point of being of actual substance something analogous was also brought about. As we now see our solar system, we find it composed of

heavenly bodies which regularly carry out recurrent movements showing a sort of inner completeness. But we find other heavenly bodies which move, indeed, with a certain rhythm, but break through, as it were, the usual laws of the solar system. These are the comets. Now, the substance of a comet does not obey the laws which exist in our solar system, but such laws as prevailed in the old Moon-existence. Indeed, the laws of that old Moon are preserved in the life of the comet. I have already often pointed out that Spiritual Science had indicated certain laws of science before they were confirmed by Natural Science. In Paris, in 1906, I drew attention to the fact that, during the old Moon-existence, certain combinations of carbon and nitrogen played a similar part to that played at the present day on our earth by combinations of oxygen and carbon, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, and so on. These latter have something deadly in them. Cyanide combinations, prussic acid combinations, played a similar part during the old Moon-existence. Attention was called to these facts by Spiritual Science in 1906, and in other lectures it was shown that comets bring the laws of the old Moon-existence into our solar system, so that not only the luciferic beings remained behind, but also the laws of the old Moon-substance, which work in our solar system in an irregular way. We have always said that a comet must

contain something like cyanide combinations in its atmosphere. Only much later, namely this year, 1910, was prussic acid found by spectrum analysis in the comet, proving what had already been made known by Spiritual Science. If we are ever asked to show whether anything can be discovered by Spiritual Science we have here a proof. There are more of such proofs if only one could observe them. So there is something of the old Moon-existence working in our present earth existence. Now we come to the question: Can it be maintained that something spiritual lies behind a phenomenon observed by means of the outer senses?

To one who knows Spiritual Science it is quite clear that there is something spiritual behind all material realities. If from the point of view of substance there is an action of the old Moon-existence on our earth existence when a comet shines upon it, then also something spiritual is working behind, and we can even distinguish what spiritual force is working in the case of Halley’s comet. Halley’s comet is the outward expression of a new impulse of materialism every time it comes within the sphere of our earth’s existence. To the world of the present day this may seem superstitious, but men must remember how they themselves bring spiritual influences from the

constellations. Who would deny that an Eskimo is a different sort of human being from a Hindu, because in the polar regions the sun’s rays strike the earth at a different angle! Everywhere the scientists themselves refer spiritual effects on mankind to constellations. A spiritual impulse towards materialism is coincident with the appearance of Halley’s comet [See Note] and this impulse can make itself felt. The appearance of this comet in 1835 was followed by that materialistic culture of the second half of the nineteenth century, and its appearance before that was followed by the materialistic enlightenment of the French Encyclopaedists. That is the connection. In order that certain things may enter into the earth’s existence, the causes must be laid long before outside the earth; and here we actually have to deal with the world-karma. The spiritual and the material have been driven out of the old moon in order that certain effects may be reflected back upon those entities that have driven them out. It is certain that the luciferic beings have been driven out and forced to develop in a different way so that for the beings on earth, free will and the possibilities of free will could originate. Here we have something which in its karmic effect extends beyond our earth existence; here is a glimpse of the world-karma!

So we have now been able to speak of the conception of karma, of its significance for each personality, each individuality, and for all mankind. We have described its influence within our earth and beyond it, and we have found something else which we may describe as the world-karma.

Thus we find the karmic law of connection between cause and effect which works in such a way that the effect in its turn works back upon the cause; and yet in reacting it keeps its essence and remains the same. We find this law of karma ruling everywhere in the world in so far as we recognise the world as a spiritual one. We dimly sense karma revealing itself in so many different ways, in entirely different spheres, and we feel how the different branches of karma — personal karma, the karma of humanity, earth karma, world karma, etc., will intersect each other. And thereby we shall have the explanation we need in order to understand life; for life can only be understood in its details if we can find how the various karmic influences are interwoven.

Note

The next appearance of the comet will be [was] in 1986. Its periodic visitations occur at intervals of about 76 years, and have been recorded since 240 BC.

During its last visit, it passed directly between the Earth and the Sun, the Earth actually passing through the tail of the cornet. It is interesting to note that this series of lectures were being given as the comet was at its closest to the Earth, May 1910. (Ed.)

2. Karma and the Animal Kingdom

BEFORE we come to the question of human karma, a number of preliminary considerations are necessary. Yesterday we gave a kind of description of the conception of karma, and to-day we shall have to say something about karma and the animal kingdom.

What might be called external evidence of the reality of karmic law will be found in the course of these lectures in places where there will be occasion specially to point out this external evidence. On these occasions also we can acquire the ability to speak about the foundations of the idea of karma to those outside who may raise questions about one thing or another, or who may question the whole idea of karma. But for all this a few preliminary observations are necessary.

What is more natural than to ask how animal life and animal fate are related to what we call the course of human karma? In this we shall find included what are, to mankind, the most important and profound questions of destiny.

The relation of man on the earth to the animal kingdom differs with the various epochs and also with the various peoples. It is certainly not without interest to see that in the case of the peoples who have preserved the best parts of the ancient sacred wisdom of humanity there is a deeply sympathetic and loving treatment of animals. For example, in the Buddhistic world which has preserved important parts of the old conceptions of the world held by mankind in ancient times, we find a very sympathetic treatment of animals, a treatment and a feeling towards the animal kingdom which many people in Europe cannot understand.

You will find it among other peoples too, especially where a nation has preserved some of the old conceptions which came to them as heirlooms in one place or another, you will find a kind of friendship, something approaching a human treatment of animals. An instance is the Arab and his treatment of his horse. On the other hand one may say that in those countries in which there is being prepared the future conception of the world, that is, in the west, there is little understanding of such sympathy with the animal kingdom. It is characteristic too that in the Middle Ages and on into our own times, precisely in those countries where Christianity has spread, the

idea has arisen that animals cannot be considered as beings having their own special soul life, but rather as something like automata. It has also been pointed out, perhaps not unjustly, although not always with great understanding, that the idea often advanced by western philosophy that the animals are automata and do not really possess a soul, may have been taken up by the common people who have no sympathy for the animals and often know no bounds in their cruel treatment of them. Indeed, the matter has gone so far that the thoughts of a great philosopher of modern times, Descartes, regarding the animal kingdom, have been thoroughly misunderstood.

Of course, we must clearly understand that the idea of animals as mere automata has never been put forward by the really eminent souls of recent culture, neither did Descartes hold this view, although in many books on philosophy you may read that he did so. It is true he does not ascribe to the animals a soul which is able to develop to where it can prove, for instance, the existence of God out of its own self-consciousness; nevertheless he does say that the animal is permeated and animated by the so-called Spirits of Life, which, though they do not present such a complete individuality as the Ego of man, do nevertheless work as soul in the animal organisation. It is indeed

characteristic that one should have been able to misunderstand Descartes so completely, for this shows us that in past centuries there has been the tendency in our western development to ascribe to the animal something merely automatic. We should not have misunderstood this had we gone to work conscientiously, but we have read it into Descartes. It is the peculiarity of western civilisation that it had to be developed out of the elements of materialism; one may even say that the dawn of Christianity took place in such a way that this important impulse in human evolution was first exercised in a materialistic western spirit. The materialism of modern times is only a consequence of this materialistic conception of Christianity, the most spiritual religion in the west. It is the fate of the peoples of the west — if we may say so — that they have to work up from materialistic foundations, and in the conquering of these materialistic views and tendencies they will develop the forces which will lead to the highest spiritual life. It is a consequence of this destiny, this karma, that the peoples of the West have a tendency to consider the animals only as automata. He who cannot penetrate into the working of spiritual life and can only judge by what surrounds him in the external world of the senses would, from the impressions of that world, easily arrive at an idea about the animal kingdom which places the

animals at the lowest scale. On the other hand, conceptions of the world which contain elements of the primordial spiritual truths, the ancient wisdom of humanity, preserved a kind of knowledge of what exists spiritually in the animal kingdom; and in spite of all this misunderstanding, in spite of all that has crept into their views of the world and destroyed their purity, they have not been able to forget that spiritual activities and spiritual laws are active in the life and development of the animal kingdom. Thus, if, on the one hand, because of our lack of spiritual conceptions we are compelled to admit ignorance concerning the animal soul nature, we must not on the other hand deceive ourselves by applying directly to the animal kingdom that idea of karma which helps to understand human fate and human karma; for this would be the result of a purely materialistic conception This must not be done.

We have already pointed out that it is necessary to consider the idea of karma with exactitude, and we should go astray if we sought in the animal kingdom for instances of the recoil of an action on the being from which the cause has proceeded. Now we can only comprehend the vast ramifications of karmic law if we go beyond a single human life between birth and death, and follow man through his consecutive

reincarnations; then we shall find that the recoil of a cause which we have set in motion in one life can only come into action in a later one. The regular law of karma stretches from life to life, and the effects of causes need not operate — indeed, when we consider karma on the whole, quite certainly do not operate — in the same life between birth and death.

Now from the more elementary teaching of Spiritual Science we already know that in the case of animals we cannot speak of a reincarnation such as takes place with man. In the animal kingdom we find nothing resembling that human individuality which is preserved when a person passes through the gate of death and lives a particular life in the spiritual world during the period from death to re-birth in order then to enter existence again by a new birth. We cannot conceive of animal death in the same way as we conceive of human death, for all that we describe as the fate of the human individuality after a person has passed through the gate of death is not the same in the animal kingdom. And if we were to believe that in an individual animal which we have before us we could look for the reincarnated being of an animal which had previously existed on the earth — as we can do in the case of man — we should be entirely wrong. At the present time, when one is inclined to

consider all one finds in the world solely from its external side and not from the inner, the great contrasts and most important differences between man and animal remain unperceived. From a purely materialistic point of view the outward phenomenon of death seems to be the same in man as in the animal. So one may easily believe, when observing the life of an animal between its birth and death, that the several phenomena in the individual life of the animal are comparable with those in the personal life of a man between birth and death. But this would be quite wrong. Therefore to begin with we should show by individual examples the essential differences between animal and man.

These differences between man and animal can only be apprehended by one who makes use of the facts which are revealed to him both by his external senses and by his speculative thought. We find a phenomenon to which attention is also drawn by natural investigators but of which those of the present day can make nothing, namely, the phenomenon that man has really to learn the simplest things. In the course of his history man has had to learn the use of the most primitive instruments, and our children have still to learn the simplest things, and have to spend a certain time in order to learn them. Man has to make

efforts to produce even the simplest things, or to manufacture his instruments and tools. When, on the other hand, we observe the animals we are obliged to admit how much easier it is for them in this respect. Think how the beaver builds its complicated dwelling. It does not need to learn; it knows how to do it, because it brings the knowledge with it as an indwelling law, just as we human beings bring with us the power of changing our teeth at about seven years of age. No one needs to learn that. In the same way, such animals as the beavers bring with them the capability to build their houses. If you observe the animal kingdom you will find that the animals bring with them definite capacities by which they can achieve things which human art, great as it is, is far from achieving.

The question may now arise: How does it come about that when a human being is born he is more incapable than, for example, a hen, or a beaver; and that he has first, with much pains, to acquire what these creatures already bring with them? For it is much more important for our world-conception that we should be able to put the right question than that we should acquire masses of knowledge. Facts may be right, but they need not always be essential to our conception of the world. Now, although we shall today

go into the causes of these phenomena from the standpoint of Spiritual Science, it would carry us too far if we were to show in detail why this is so. But we may, to begin with, refer to it in a few words.

If with the aid of Spiritual Science we go back into human evolution in the primeval past we shall find that the forces which are at the disposal of the beaver or of any other animal, in order that they should bring such artistic powers into the world, were at one time at the disposal of man. It is not that man in a primordial past missed this endowment of capabilities while the animals took them all to themselves; he also received these powers, indeed in a far greater degree than the animals. For although the latter bring a certain great artistic skill into the world with them, this is, however, limited in extent. Fundamentally at birth man can do nothing at all, and he has first to learn everything which concerns the outer world. This is somewhat strongly expressed, but you will understand what I mean. Now, when a man learns, it is soon shown that he can become many-sided, and that as regards the development of certain artistic capacities, etc., this can be far richer than that of an animal. So man originally brought with him more abundant powers, which he does not bring today. The peculiar phenomenon comes to life, that originally man and

animal were similarly endowed; and if we were to go back to the old Saturn evolution, we should find that there was absolutely no difference between human and animal development. All these capabilities were common to both. What then has happened in the meantime that the animal now brings with it into existence all sorts of capacities, while man is really a clumsy being when he comes into the world? How has man behaved in the meantime that he now no longer possesses all he once brought with him? Has he foolishly wasted it in the course of evolution, while the animals have preserved it like thrifty house-keepers? These are questions that may be raised on the basis of actual facts.

Man has not wasted these powers which to-day the animal manifests as external capacities; he has only transformed them, but into something which differs from what the animals possess. They have applied them to external works; beavers build their homes and wasps their nests, but man has transformed and incorporated within himself the same forces which the animals manifest outwardly, and by this means he has brought into being what we call his higher human organisation. In order that man should be able to walk upright, in order that he should have a more perfect brain, and, in general, a more perfect inner

organisation, certain forces were necessary, and these are the same forces with which the beaver constructs his dwelling. The beaver builds his home, but man has turned the forces inwards upon himself, to his brain, etc., and so he has nothing left over with which to work outwardly. So if we, at the present time move among the animals with a more perfect constitution, it is due to the fact that we have applied inwardly all the forces that the beaver expends in an outward way. We have our beaver-building within us, and therefore we are no longer able to manifest these forces outwardly in the same way. When we take a comprehensive view of the world, we understand the origin of the various capacities which exist in creation, and how they appear to us to-day.

Why had man to turn towards an inner organisation the special forces which we see manifested in the external achievements of animals? Because only by acquiring this inner organisation could man become the vehicle of what at the present day is the Ego which progresses from incarnation to incarnation. No other organisation could have become this bearer of the Ego, because it depends altogether upon the external shrine whether an Ego individuality is able to be active in the earthly existence or not. It could not do so if the external organisation were not suited to

the Ego-individuality. Everything contributed to making this organisation thus suitable, and to this end a particular arrangement had to be made, the essentials of which we already know.

We know that the Moon evolution preceded the Earth evolution. Before that again was the Sun evolution which was preceded by a Saturn evolution. When the ancient Moon evolution came to an end, man was at a stage of development — as regards his external life — which may be described as animal-humanity. At that time this external human organisation had not progressed far enough for it to become the vehicle of an Ego-individuality. It was the Earth evolution of man which had the task of embodying the Ego in this organisation. But this could only come about by regulating our Earth evolution in a very special way. When the old Moon development came to an end, everything dissolved, so to speak, into chaos. Up to a certain time of cosmic dawn, the new cosmos of our Earth evolution came forth. In it was contained everything which, as our solar system, is connected with us and the Earth. From this whole, from this cosmic unity there split off all the other planetary bodies belonging to our special Earth existence. We need not go into the manner in which the other planets, Jupiter, Mars, etc., split off. We have

only to point out that at a certain period in our Earth-phase of evolution, our Earth and our Sun separated. While the Sun had already separated and was sending down its activities to the Earth from outside, our Earth was still united with the present Moon, so that the substances and spiritual forces which at the present day belong to the Moon, at that time were still united with the Earth.

Now we have often touched upon the question as to what would have happened if the Sun had not split away from the Earth, and passed over into that condition in which it works on the Earth from outside as it does now. In the beginning when the Earth was still united to the Sun, the conditions were quite different and the whole cosmic system included the ancestors of the human organisation making one unity. It is absurd to look at modern conditions and say: ‘What nonsense those Anthroposophists talk! If that had been so, all beings would have been burnt up!’ But these beings were so organised that at that time they could exist under conditions quite different from those of this epoch. Now if the Sun had remained in union with the Earth, forces very different and much more violent would have remained with the Earth; and the consequence would have been that the whole evolution of the Earth would have progressed with

such violence and speed that it would have been impossible for the human organisation to develop as it should. Therefore it was necessary that the Earth should be given a slower tempo, and denser forces placed at its disposal. This could only be brought about by the withdrawal of the violent and stormy forces from the Earth. The forces of the Sun worked less violently when acting from outside after withdrawal from the Earth. Through this, however, something else took place. The Earth was now in a condition in which mankind could again not progress in the right way. The state of the Earth was now too dense, and it exercised a drying and petrifying action on all life. If conditions had remained so, man would have again been unable to develop. This was remedied by a special arrangement. Some time after the exit of the Sun the present Moon left the Earth, and took away the retarding forces which would have brought all life to a slow death. Thus the Earth remained behind between Sun and Moon, selecting exactly the right tempo for the human organisation, and enabling it to take up an Ego, and to be the bearer of the individuality which goes on from incarnation to incarnation. The human organisation as it exists to-day was produced from the cosmos under no other conditions than through this process — first the separation of the Sun and then that of the Moon.

Someone might perhaps say: ‘If I had been the Almighty I would have done it differently; I would very soon have produced such a combination that the human organisation would have been able to progress in the manner it had to progress! Why was it necessary that the Sun had first to go out and then after a time the Moon?’

The person who thinks in this way thinks much too abstractly. He does not reflect that when in the universal order so complex a thing as the human organisation is to be produced, a special arrangement is necessary for each single part. One cannot convert into reality what human thought invents and imagines. Abstractly one can think anything, but in true Spiritual Science one has to learn to think concretely so that one says: The human organisation is not a simple thing; it consists of a physical body, an etheric body and an astral body. These three parts had first to be brought into a particular equilibrium, so that the several parts should be correctly related to one another. This could only take place through this threefold process: First, the formation of the unitary cosmos — the entire cosmic unity of Earth, Sun and Moon together. Then something had to be done that would work in a retarding way on the human etheric body which would otherwise have consumed all

evolution too fiercely — this was accomplished by the withdrawal of the Sun. Then again the Moon had to be withdrawn, because otherwise through the astral body the human organisation would have died. These three processes had to take place because of man’s threefold organisation.

Thus we see that man owes his existence and his present qualities to a complicated arrangement in the cosmos. But we also know that the evolutions of all the kingdoms of nature do not by any means proceed at the same rate as the general evolution. From various lectures given in preceding years, we know that on each of the planetary incarnations of the earth, certain beings have always remained behind the general evolution. Then, as evolution proceeds they live in conditions which do not fully correspond to this evolution. We also know that fundamentally all evolution can only proceed in the right way through the remaining behind of these entities. During the old Moon evolution certain beings remained behind as the luciferic beings, and through them much that is evil has resulted; but to them we also owe what makes human existence possible, namely, the possibility of freedom, of the free development of our inner being. Indeed, we may say that in a certain sense the remaining behind of the luciferic beings was a

sacrifice. They remained behind so that during the Earth existence they could exercise certain activities; they could bestow on man the qualities which pertain to his dignity and the ordaining of his destiny. We must accustom ourselves to entirely different ideas from those which are customary; for according to the usual ideas one might perhaps say that the luciferic spirits failed to progress and had to remain behind; and we could not excuse their negligence. But it was not a question of the negligence of the luciferic beings; in a certain sense their remaining behind was a sacrifice, in order that they might be able to work on our earthly humanity through what they acquired by this sacrifice.

From the last lecture you already know that not only beings but also substances remained behind and preserved laws which in previous planetary conditions were the right ones, and then carried those laws into the later evolution. Thus phases of evolution belonging to ancient times mingle and interpenetrate with those of modern times. And it is this which brings about such great complexities in life, which offers us degrees of existence [that are] the most diverse. The animal kingdom could never have developed alongside the human kingdom to-day if certain beings had not remained behind at the end of the Saturn

period in order, while mankind on the Sun was already developing a stage higher, to form a second kingdom and come forward as the first ancestors of our present animal kingdom. Thus this remaining behind was absolutely necessary as a base for later formations.

Now a comparison may explain why beings and substances had to remain behind. The development of man had to progress by degrees, and it could only do this in the same degree to which man refined himself. Had he always worked with the same forces with which he had worked during the Saturn phase, he would not have progressed, but would have remained behind. For this reason he had to refine his forces. As an illustration, let us suppose we have a glass of water in which some substance is dissolved. Everything in this glass from top to bottom will be of the same colour, the same density, etc. Now let us suppose that the grosser substances settle to the bottom; then the purer water and the finer substances remain above. The water could only be refined by separation of the grosser parts. Something like this was also necessary after the Saturn evolution had run its course, so that such a sediment appeared, and the whole of humanity separated from something, retaining all the finer parts. That which was left formed later the animal kingdom. By means of this separation man was able to

refine himself, and rise a stage higher. At each step certain beings have to be separated, in order that man may rise higher and higher.

Thus we have a humanity which has only become possible through man’s freeing himself from the beings which live around him in the lower kingdoms. At one time we were bound up with these beings, with all their forces, in the stress of evolution like the denser constituents in the water. We have uplifted ourselves from them and in this way our development has been made possible. Thus we look down upon the three kingdoms of nature around us, and see in them something which had to become a basis for our development. These beings have sunk in order that we might be able to rise. In this manner we look upon the subordinate kingdoms of nature from the proper aspect.

The study of the Earth development will help us to understand the details of this process still more clearly. We must quite understand that all the facts in our earthly development have certain relationships and connections. We have seen that the separation of the Sun and Moon from the Earth really came about in order that during the Earth evolution the human organisation might be able to develop to the extent of

becoming an individuality; and in conjunction with this the human organisation was made pure. But through this separation in the universe for man’s sake, through this great change in our solar system, the other three kingdoms of nature were also affected — especially the animal kingdom. If we wish to understand the influence exercised upon the animal kingdom through the processes of the separation of the Sun and Moon, this is what we arrive at as a result of spiritual investigation: —

Man was at a certain stage of evolution when the Sun separated. Now had he been obliged to keep to this stage at which he was during the period when the Moon was still united to the Earth, he would not have been able to attain his present organisation; he would have been confronted with a certain wasting and drying up. The Moon forces had first to go out. The possibility of this human organisation we owe only to the circumstance that during the period when the Moon was still part of the Earth, man had preserved an organisation which could still be pliable; for it might have been possible for his organisation to become so set that the exit of the Moon could no longer be of any use. Only the ancestors of humanity were at that pliable stage at which the organisation was still possible. Therefore the Moon had to separate at a

particular time. Now what took place up to the time of the exit of the Moon?

The human organisation became grosser and grosser. Man did not, indeed, look like wood — that would be too gross a conception. The organisation at that time in spite of its grossness was still much finer than is our present organisation; but for that period between the exit of the Sun and that of the Moon, the organisation of man was so gross that the more spiritual part of him, which in a certain sense lived alternately within and without the physical body came at length to the crisis that when it wanted to re-enter its physical body it found this so dense, owing to events that had taken place on the earth that it could no longer enter into it as its dwelling. Hence it also came about that the spiritual and soul part of many of our human ancestors departed altogether from the earth, and for a certain time took refuge on other planets belonging to our solar system. Only a small number of the physical bodies could be used and maintain themselves over this time. As I have said, by far the greater number of human souls went out into space, but the onward stream of human evolution was maintained by a small number of those who were more robust and who were able to struggle and conquer.

These robust souls carried the evolution over the critical period.

During the whole of this process the human individuality was still not evolved. There was still more of the character of the species soul, and when some souls withdrew they went into the soul groups.

Then came the exit of the Moon which made it possible for the human organisation to be further refined. It could then take up the souls which had previously soared away, and these souls gradually — up to and during the Atlantean Epoch — came down again and entered into the human bodies below. But certain organisms had reproduced themselves during this critical time and they could not become the vehicles of the human soul as they were too gross. Through this it came about that side by side with those organisations which were able to be refined and to become the vehicles of human individuality there had also been propagated organisms which could not, and these were the successors of the organisms which had been abandoned by the human soul during the time when the Sun had already withdrawn and the Moon was still united with the earth.

Thus side by side with man we see a kingdom of organisms actually developing, which, by preserving the Moon character had become incapable of being the vehicles of human individuality.

These organisms are essentially those which have become our present animal kingdom. It may seem curious that the grosser organisms of the present animals have certain capacities whereby they are able to act wisely, as is instanced in the work of the beaver, etc.; but this can be fully explained if we do not think too superficially. It is precisely the organisation of these beings which have not been entered into by human souls, which has developed the external arrangements of the animal structure — a nervous system, etc., that has made it possible for them to place themselves entirely in harmony with the laws of the Earth existence. For those beings which did not evolve the capacity for taking up human souls, remained united with the earth the whole time. The other organisations which later refined themselves, so that they could take in human individualities, certainly were also with them on the earth, but because they had to undergo certain changes later on when the Moon was outside, they lost these capacities, or rather transmuted them in refining themselves, and in having to go through other changes.

Thus we notice that when the Moon had separated, there were upon the earth certain organisations which had simply reproduced in themselves the old conditions such as existed when the Moon was formerly united with the Earth. These organisations had remained gross, had preserved the laws which they had before, and had become so set that when the Moon detached itself, no change took place in them. They simply propagated themselves rigidly further. The other organisations which were to become the vehicles of human individualities could not perpetuate themselves rigidly as the grosser organisations did. They had to change themselves in such a way that those beings which meanwhile had not been united with the Earth, and must now return to it, could now work into them. Here we have the difference between the beings which have preserved the old rigid Moon character and those which have changed themselves. Now, in what did the change consist?

When those souls which had gone away from the earth returned, and once more took possession of bodies, they began to make alterations in the nervous system, the brain, etc. They applied their forces, as it were, to inward construction. There could be no change now in the other beings which had hardened. Different beings now took possession of these latter

organisms, beings which had remained behind at a previous stage and which were not sufficiently evolved to operate on the organism from within. They worked rather from the outside as the Group-Souls of the animals. Thus the human soul came into possession of the organisations which were suited to them after the exit of the Moon, and these beings then worked up the organisation into what led to a perfect human structure. Those organisations which remained rigid during the Moon period could no longer be changed, certain souls then took possession of these, such souls as had not on the whole developed far enough to set to work in an individuality, but had remained behind at the Moon stage, developing as far as was then possible. They therefore now took possession of these lower organisations as ‘Group-Souls.’

Thus the difference between man and animal is explained by cosmic events. Through cosmic processes in the Earth’s evolution two kinds of organisations have been produced. Had we been obliged to remain with a structure such as that of the beings immediately below mankind we should now be obliged to hover around the earth because our organisation would have been too rigid. We could not, therefore, have come down into them, and although we had become more perfect beings, we should have

had to remain where the organisation of the group-souls of the animals are. As, however, our organisations were able to refine themselves, we could enter into them and use them as our dwelling place; that is we could descend into bodily incarnations. The group-souls did not need to do this; they act on these beings from the spiritual world.

Thus in the animal kingdom surrounding us we see something that we also should have been to-day, if our present organisation had not been transformed. Let us now ask how the animals with their more rigid organisations have appeared on the earth. They came down through us. They are the descendants of the bodies which we no longer wished to occupy after the exit of the Moon. We left those bodies behind in order to find others later and we should not have been able to find others later, if we had not forsaken those at that precise time. For only after the exit of the Sun could we continue our progress on the Earth. We left behind us as it were, certain beings, in order that we ourselves might find the possibility of rising higher. In order to rise higher we had to go to other planets and leave the bodies below to go to ruin, and in a certain sense we owe what we are to what remains below. Indeed, what we owe may be described still more minutely. We may ask how it was possible for us to

leave the Earth during the critical period, for a being cannot go just where it likes.

During the Earth evolution there came for the first time something we owe to the luciferic spirits. They were our leaders and took us away from the Earth evolution at the critical period. It was as though they said to us: ‘Down below a critical time is now coming and you must leave the Earth.’ We left the Earth under the guidance of the Lucifer spirits, the same beings who brought into our astral body of that time the luciferic principle, the tendency in us to all that we call the possibility of evil; but with it also at the same time came the possibility of freedom. Had they not taken us away from the Earth at that time we should always have been chained to the form that we had then created, and we should now, at the most, only be able to float above that form without ever being able to enter. So they took us away and united their own being with our being.

If we bear this in mind we shall understand that during the time we went away we took in the luciferic influences. Those other organisations which did not share in this destiny whereby we were led to certain regions of the world, remained down below without the luciferic influence. They had to share our earthly

fate, but they could not share our heavenly fate. And when we came back to the earth we had the luciferic influence in us — but those other beings had not. Thereby it became possible for us to lead a life in a physical body and yet a life independent of it, so that we might become more and more independent of the physical body. But these other beings which had not the luciferic influence represent what our astral bodies were in the interval between the exit of the Sun and that of the Moon, namely that from which we liberated ourselves. We look upon the animals and say: ‘All that the animals manifest in the way of cruelty, voracity, and all animal vices, besides the skill which they have we should have had within us, if we had not been able to eject them. We owe this liberation of our astral bodies to the circumstance that all the grosser astral bodies have remained behind in the animal kingdom and the earth.’ We may, indeed, say that it is well for us that we no longer have the cruelty of the lion, the slyness of the fox, etc., but that these are withdrawn from us and lead an independent existence outside us.

Thus the animals have the astral body in common with us, and are therefore able to feel pain. But from what has now been said we see that they do not possess the power to evolve through pain and through the conquest of pain, for they have no individuality.

The animals are on this account much more to be pitied than us. We have to bear pain, but each pain is for us a means to perfection; through overcoming it we rise higher. We have left behind us the animal as something that already has the capacity to feel pain but does not yet possess the power to raise itself above pain, and to triumph by means of it. That is the fate of the animals. They manifest to us our own former organisation when we were capable of feeling pain, but could not yet, through overcoming the pain, transform it into something beneficial for humanity. Thus in the course of our earthly evolution we have left off our worst to the animals, and they stand around us as tokens of how we ourselves came to our perfection. We should not have got rid of the dregs if we had not left the animals behind. We must learn to consider such facts, not as theories, but rather with a cosmic world feeling. When we look upon the animals we should feel: ‘You animals are outside. When you suffer, you suffer something of which we reap the benefit. We men, however, have the power to overcome suffering while you must endure it. Having received suffering we have passed it on to you, and are taking to ourselves the power to overcome it.’

If we develop this cosmic feeling out of the theory, we then experience a great and all-embracing feeling

of sympathy for the animal kingdom. Hence when this universal feeling sprang from the primeval wisdom of humanity, when mankind still possessed the remembrance of the original knowledge which told each one by a dim clairvoyant vision how things once were, there was preserved with it sympathy for the animal kingdom also, and this to a high degree. This sympathy will come again when people accustom themselves to take up Spiritual Science, and when they again see how the karma of humanity is bound up with the world karma. In the so-called dark ages when materialistic thought held sway, one could not have the right perception of this connection. At that time one observed only what was side by side in space, without taking into consideration the fact that whatever is side by side in space has a common origin, and has only separated in the course of evolution. It was natural that one should cease to feel the connection between man and animal; and in those parts of the earth where it has been the mission to hide the spiritual knowledge of this connection, replacing it by a consciousness concerning itself only with outward physical space, man has paid in a strange fashion his debt to the animals. He has eaten them.

These things show us how world conceptions are connected with the human world of perception and feeling. The latter are the consequences of the former and as the conceptions and ideas change, the perceptions and feelings of humanity also change. Man could not do otherwise than evolve. It is due to this that he had to push other beings into the abyss so that he could rise higher himself. He could not give them an individuality which compensates karmically for what the animals have to suffer; he could only give them pain, without being able to give them the karmic compensation. But what he could not give them before, he will give them when he has come to the freedom and selflessness of his individuality. Then he will consciously apprehend the karmic law in this realm and will say ‘It is to the animals that I owe what I have now become. As the animals have fallen from an individual existence to a shadow existence I cannot repay to them what they have sacrificed for me, but I must make this good, so far as is possible, by the treatment I extend to them.’ Therefore with the progress of evolution there will come again through the consciousness of karma a better relationship between man and the animal kingdom than there is now, especially in the west. There will come a treatment of the animals whereby man will again uplift those he has pushed down.

Thus we see that there is a certain relationship, between karma and the animal kingdom, although we cannot, if we wish to avoid the confusion of thought, compare what the animal experiences as its fate, with human karma. But if we consider the whole Earth development, we shall see that we can indeed speak of a relation between the karma of humanity and the animal kingdom.

3. Karma in Relation to Disease and Health

THE observations we shall have to make in this and succeeding lectures may be exposed to a certain misunderstanding. We shall have to deal with various questions about disease and health from the standpoint of karma, but owing to the contrary nature of present currents of thought on this subject a wrong idea of the spiritually scientific basis may easily be formed when this subject is touched upon. We know that the most varied circles discuss these questions of health and disease, and that the discussion is often carried on with considerable vehemence and passion. Sides are taken by the laity quite as much as by certain physicians against what is called scientific medicine, and it can easily be seen how the partisans of scientific medicine are perhaps provoked by many an unjustified attack, so that they not only fall into a kind of passion when they feel called upon, and rightly too, to enter the lists on behalf of what science has to say on this matter, but they also wage war against what is said contrary to their own views on the subject in question. Anthroposophy or Spiritual Science will be able to do justice to its high task only if it succeeds in maintaining an unprejudiced and objective judgement in this field which has been so much darkened by

discussions. Those who have often heard lectures from me will know how little I am disposed to join the chorus of those who wish to discredit what is described as academic medicine; in Spiritual Science there is no question of agreement with one particular party or another.

As a preliminary observation we may say that the achievements of recent years in regard to health and the actual investigations into the phenomena of disease really arouse praise, recognition, and admiration, just as do numerous other scientific discoveries. Concerning what has been actually accomplished in this realm, it may be said that if anyone may rejoice at all about what medicine has accomplished in recent years it is Spiritual Science that should do so. On the other hand, we must point out that the achievements and actual knowledge and discoveries of Natural Science are by no means always truly and satisfactorily interpreted and explained by present-day scientific opinion. It is indeed most patent in many fields of scientific investigation that the opinions and theories have not grown in accordance with the positive ideas and facts which are sometimes marvellous. The light which proceeds from Spiritual Science will also successfully illuminate the scientific conquests of recent years.

After this preliminary observation it will be seen that we are not concerned with any sort of an agreement in a paltry skirmish regarding what can be done at the present time in the field of scientific medicine. It may be said, however, that the most admirable facts which have so far been brought to light cannot bear fruit for the good of humanity in our day because the materialistically coloured opinions and theories prevalent to-day render them sterile. So it is much better for Anthroposophy modestly to say what it has to say than to take part in any sort of party war. In this way it will arouse much less the passions already so excited at the present time.

If we wish to obtain a point of view from which to consider the questions that are to occupy us, we must first realise that the cause of any phenomena has to be sought for in a variety of ways; there are nearer and more remote causes, and where Anthroposophy wishes to discover the karmic cause of health, it will have to occupy itself a little with the more remote causes not on the surface. We will give an illustration of this, which upon reflection will soon be understood.

Let us take the standpoint of one who thinks that we are gloriously advanced at the present day in this field, and who altogether despises the opinions on

health and disease which were advanced in previous centuries. If we survey the questions of disease and health, we gain the impression that the representatives of this view usually conclude that what has come to light in this field within the last twenty or thirty years is a kind of absolute truth which may, indeed, be supplemented, but can never be gainsaid as can the knowledge which has been acquired in past ages. For example it is often said: ‘In this field we find the grossest superstition in bygone times!’ And then truly startling examples are given of the way in which in past centuries they tried to heal one complaint or another. It is considered to be exceptionally bad when one comes across terms which for the modern consciousness have lost the meaning they possessed at that time. Thus some say: ‘There were times when every illness was ascribed to God or the devil!’ This was not so bad as these people make it out to be, because they can form no idea of what was intended by the expression ‘God’ or ‘devil.’ We can make this very clear by means of an illustration.

Let us suppose that two persons are speaking together. One says to the other: ‘I have just seen a room full of flies. Someone said it was quite natural the room should be full of flies, and I thought so too, for the room was very dirty and so the flies thrive.’ It is

quite natural that one should accept this as a reason for the existence of the flies and it will be quite reasonable to say that if the room were thoroughly cleaned the flies would disappear. But there was another person who said that he knew a different reason for the flies in the room, and that the real cause was that for a long time a very lazy housewife had lived there. Now what boundless superstition to think that laziness was a kind of personality which needed only to beckon, and then in came the flies! Surely the explanation which attributes the presence of flies to the dirt is a better one. There happens almost the same thing when one says: ‘Someone has fallen ill through being infected by some sort of bacillus; if this is driven out, the person will be well again.’ Others talk about a spiritual cause which lies deeper down, but to effect a cure they still think it necessary only to drive out the bacillus. To talk of a spiritual cause of illness while admitting all the rest is no more superstitious than to say as in the first case that the presence of the flies was due to a lazy housewife. And there is no need to be angry if someone says that the flies would not be there if the room were clean. It is not a question of one view being in opposition to the other; rather the holder of each view should learn to understand the other and study his meaning. One must carefully take into consideration whether only

the immediate causes are spoken of, or whether indirect causes are referred to. The objective Anthroposophist will never take this standpoint that laziness needs only to beckon for the flies to come into the room; he will know that other material things also come into consideration. But everything which has a material expression has its spiritual background, and for the welfare of humanity this spiritual background has to be sought. Those, however, who would like to take part in the combat should also be reminded that spiritual causes will not always be understood in the same way and also cannot be combated in the same way as ordinary material causes; and one must not always think that by fighting the spiritual causes there would be no need to combat the material causes; for then one might allow the room to remain dirty, and seek to cure the idleness of the housewife. What is necessary is that each of these two parties should understand the other's point of view and not quarrel with him about it.

Now when we are considering karma we must speak of connections of events which came into human life in former times, and how they manifest themselves later in their after-effects on the same human being. If we speak of health and disease from the standpoint of karma we must ask: 'Can we connect the healthy and

diseased condition with the former deeds and experiences of this person, and how will his present condition of health or disease later react upon him?’

The man of the present day would far rather believe that disease is connected only with immediate causes. For the fundamental tendency in the modern view of life is always to seek what is most convenient. And it is certainly convenient to go no further than the immediate cause. Therefore in considering human diseases, only the immediate causes are taken into consideration, and most of all is this the case with the invalid himself. For it cannot be denied that the patients themselves are led to take this standpoint, and because of this there exists so much dissatisfaction. When there is the belief that the disease must have an immediate cause which must be found by the skilled physician, and when he cannot help, he is accused of having bungled somewhere. From this convenient method of judgement proceeds much of what is said at the present day on this subject. One who knows how to observe the wide-spreading effects of karma will always extend his gaze more and more from what happens now to events which lie comparatively far back. Above all, he will be convinced that a complete understanding of some circumstance in a person’s life is only possible when

an extended view over what lies further back can be obtained. Especially is this so in the case of illness. When speaking of people who are ill, and also of those who are well, the question arises, ‘How can we form an idea of the nature of disease?’

When spiritual investigation is carried on directly with the aid of the spiritual organs of perception, it will always — when dealing with the diseases of man — notice irregularities, not only in the physical body, but also in the higher principles, in the etheric and astral bodies. The spiritual investigator must always in the case of illness consider, on the one hand the share the physical body may have in this particular case, and, on the other, the share of the etheric body and the astral body; for all three principles may be involved in the disease. The question now arises: ‘What ideas can we form about the processes of disease?’ The answer to this question may be found most easily by first considering how far the idea of disease may be extended. Let us leave it to those who enjoy using such allegorical and symbolic language to talk about diseases of minerals or metals. Let them talk about rust as disease of the iron. We must be quite clear that if we use purely abstract ideas we can gain no practical knowledge of life but can arrive at only a fantastic view, and not one which really penetrates

into the facts. If we wish to arrive at a real idea of disease and also a real idea of health, we shall have to guard against saying that minerals and metals can also have diseases.

But matters are quite different when we come to the vegetable kingdom. We may certainly speak of the diseases of plants, for a real comprehension of the idea of disease these diseases of plants are especially interesting and important. In the case of plants, if again one does not go to work in a fantastic way, one cannot well speak of ‘inner causes of diseases,’ in the same way as with animals and men. The diseases of plants can always be traced to outer causes, such as some detrimental influence in the ground, insufficient light, this or that effect of the wind and other elementary activities in nature. Or they may be traced to the influence of parasites which live upon the plants and injure them. In the vegetable kingdom the idea of ‘inner causes of disease’ cannot be justified. It is, of course, impossible in the short space of time at our disposal to furnish innumerable proofs of what I have just indicated, but the deeper one goes into the pathology of plants the more it can be seen that in their case inner causes of disease do not exist, but that we have to deal with external injuries or other external influences.

Now a plant such as we see in the external world is a being which is made up of a physical and etheric body. At the same time it is a being which brings to our notice the fact that what we call the physical and etheric body are in principle healthy, and that it has to wait until it meets with an external injury before it can become diseased. The researches of Spiritual Science confirm that this is the true state of affairs. Whereas through spiritual scientific research into the diseases of animal and human being we are able to see quite decided changes in the inner or super-sensible part of the being, in the case of a diseased plant we are never able to say that the original etheric body itself is changed, but only that all kinds of disturbances and harmful influences from outside have penetrated into the physical body and especially into the etheric body. Spiritual Science entirely confirms the following general conclusion: In the constituent parts of the plant, namely, physical and etheric bodies, we have before us something which is in essence healthy. But it is another thing to see how when it has suffered external damage it can safeguard by all sorts of means its growth and development, and heal the injury. Notice for instance how, if you cut a plant, it tries to grow round the injured part, and to get round what then interferes with and injures it. We can see when an external injury occurs, the clear manifestation of the

healing power which the plant has in its inner organisation. In the etheric and physical bodies of the plant exist healing forces which are brought into play when some exterior injury is inflicted. This is an extremely important fact if we wish to come to a clear understanding in this realm. A being such as a plant, having physical and etheric body thus shows that these principles are fundamentally healthy. There is in them sufficient force not only for the development and growth of the plant, but also there is a super-abundance of these forces which manifest themselves as healing powers when injuries come from outside. Whence, then, do these healing forces come? If you wound a merely physical body the injury will remain; it is unable of itself to repair the injury. For this reason, we cannot talk of a disease in the case of a merely physical body, and least of all can we talk of a relation between disease and healing. This we can best see when a disease appears in a plant. Here we have to look for the principle of the inner healing power in the etheric body. Spiritual investigation shows us this very clearly, for the activity of the etheric body of the plant is much intensified round the part where the wound has been inflicted. It brings forth from itself entirely different forms, and develops entirely different currents. It is an extremely interesting fact that we call

on the etheric body of a plant to exercise increased activity when we injure its physical body.

We have not indeed defined the concept of disease but we have done something to arrive at its nature, and we have gained something which gives us an inkling of the inward process of healing.

Following the clue given by inward spiritual observation let us go further and try to understand the external phenomena to which Spiritual Science leads us. Then we may pass from the consideration of the injuries we give to plants to those we give to animals which, in addition to the etheric body, have also an astral body. If we carry our observations further we shall see that the etheric body of a higher animal reacts correspondingly less to an external injury. The higher the animal is in the scale of evolution so much the less will be the action of the etheric body. If we cause a severe injury to the physical body of a lower or even a higher mammal; if, for instance, we tear a leg from a dog or some such animal, we find that the etheric body cannot answer with its healing power in the same measure as the etheric body of a plant replies to a similar injury to itself. But even in the animal kingdom this action of the etheric body can still be seen to a great extent. Let us descend to a very

low order of animals — to the tritons. If we cut off certain organs from such a being they do not experience anything particularly painful. The organs quickly grow again, and the animal soon looks as it did before.

In this case something similar has taken place to that which occurred in the case of the plant; we have called forth a certain healing power in the etheric body. But we should not deny that such provocation to develop healing powers in the etheric body of man or of higher animals would mean a considerable risk to health. The lower animal on the contrary will only be stimulated from its inner being to put forth another member by means of its etheric body.

Now if one of the limbs of a crab is severed, the animal cannot at once renew it. But when it casts its shell the next time and arrives at the next transition stage of its life, a stump appears; the second time the stump grows larger, and if the animal were to cast its shell often enough, the limb would be replaced by a new one. These facts show us that the etheric body must make greater efforts to call forth the inner forces of healing; and in the higher animals the healing power is still less. If you mutilate a higher animal it can do nothing towards replacing the limb. Here we

must allude to a fact which at the present time is the subject of an important dispute in the field of Natural Science: If you mutilate an animal, and the animal has progeny, the deformities are not transmitted to the offspring; the next generation has again the complete parts. When the etheric body carries its qualities over to the offspring it is again stimulated to form a complete organism. The etheric body of a triton still acts in the same animal; in a crab it acts only when it casts its shell; in the higher animals the same phenomenon appears only in the offspring, and there the etheric body replaces what had been mutilated in the previous generation. If we observe these phenomena rightly we shall clearly perceive that we must still speak of the healing forces in the etheric body even if these forces are manifested only in the succeeding generation when the offspring is born without the mutilation which the parent suffered. Here we have, as it were, a research into the why and wherefore of the healing powers of the etheric body.

We might now ask the question: How is it, then, that the higher we rise in the animal kingdom — and this applies externally to the human kingdom also — we find that the healing forces of the etheric body have to make greater efforts to manifest themselves? This depends upon the fact that the etheric body may be

bound to the physical body in very different ways. Between the physical body and the etheric body there may be a more intimate union or a loose one. For example, let us take the triton, in which the severed member is replaced very quickly. Here we must assume a loose connection between the physical body and the etheric body, and this applies in the vegetable kingdom to a still higher degree. This union, let us say, is such that the physical body is unable to react upon the etheric body, and the latter remains untouched by what happens to the physical body and is in a certain sense independent of it. Now the nature of the etheric body is that of activity, of generation and growth. It encourages growth up to a certain point. When we cut off a part, the etheric body is immediately prepared to restore that part, and to that end unfolds all its activities. But what is the reason if it cannot develop all its activities? The reason is to be found in a closer dependence on the physical body. This is the case with the higher animals. There is here a much more intimate union between the etheric body and the physical body, and when the physical body develops its form and organises the forces of physical nature, these forces react upon the etheric body.

To put it clearly: In the lower animals or the plants, that which is outside does not react on the etheric

body but leaves it untouched, carrying on an independent existence. When we come to the higher animals, reactions of the physical body are imposed upon the etheric body which adapts itself completely to the physical body; so that if we injure the physical body, we injure the etheric body at the same time. Hence the etheric body has to exercise greater powers if it has first to heal itself and then the corresponding member in the physical body. Therefore in the case of the etheric body of a higher animal, deeper healing forces must be called forth. But what is the connection? Why is the etheric body of a higher animal so dependant upon the forms of the physical body?

The higher we advance in the animal creation the more do we have to consider, not only the activity of the etheric body and the physical body, but also that of the astral body. In the case of the lower animals the activity of the astral body comes but little into consideration. For this reason the lower animals still have so many qualities in common with the plants. The higher we ascend, the more does the astral body come into action, and this action is such that it makes the etheric body subservient to itself. A being such as a plant, which has only physical body and etheric body, has little to do with the external world; an action

may be exercised upon the plant from outside, but this is not reflected as an inward experience. Where an astral body is active, external impressions are reflected into inner experiences, but a being in which the astral body is inactive is more shut off from the external world. The more the astral body is active the more does a being open itself to the external world. Thus the astral body unites the inner nature of a being with the outer world, and the increasing activity of the astral body brings it about that the etheric body has to use much stronger forces to make injuries good.

If we now pass on from animals to man, a new element arises. Man does not simply conform to certain prescribed functions inspired by the astral body as is the case with the animals which have, as it were, a course outlined for them in advance, and which live more according to an established programme. We could scarcely say of an animal that it departs to any great extent from its instincts, or that it follows its instincts with more or less moderation. It follows its plan of life, and all its actions are submitted to a sort of general programme. But man, having risen higher on the ladder of evolution, is able to discern between right and wrong, truth and falsehood, good and evil. Through purely individual motives he comes into touch with the outer world in various ways. These

contacts react and make an impression upon his astral body, and as a consequence of the interaction between his astral body and etheric body, both now suffer these reactions. Thus if a person leads a dissolute life in any respect it will make an impression on his astral body which in its turn influences the etheric body. How it will do this will depend upon what has been laid down in the astral body. Therefore we shall now be able to understand that the etheric body of man alters, according as he leads this or that life within the limits of good or evil, right or wrong, truth or falsehood, etc. All these exercise an influence on his etheric body.

Let us now remember what takes place when a human being passes through the portal of death. We know that the physical body is laid aside and that the etheric body, now united with the astral body and the Ego, remains. When a certain length of time has passed after death, a time which is measured only by days, the etheric body is thrown aside as a second corpse; an extract, however, of the etheric body is left over and this is taken along and kept permanently. In this extract of the etheric body is contained as if in an essence, all that has penetrated the etheric body, for example, from a dissolute life, or from true or false thinking, feeling and action. This is contained in the

etheric body and he takes it with him in the period up to a new birth. As an animal does not have such experiences, it cannot, of course, take anything over in the same way beyond the portal of death. When the person again comes into existence by birth, the essence of his previous etheric body is something which now impregnates his new etheric body, and permeates its structure. Therefore in his new existence the person has in his etheric body the results of what he had experienced in his previous life, and as the etheric body is the builder of an entirely new organisation at a new birth, all this now imprints itself on his physical body also. How does this come about?

Spiritual investigation shows us that in the form of a human body which enters into existence by birth, we are able to see approximately what deeds a person did in a previous life. In the case of an animal we cannot say that at its birth it brings with it a reincarnated individuality from a previous earth life. Only the common astral body of this species of animal is active, and this will limit the healing power of the etheric body of this animal. In man we find that not only his astral body but also his etheric body is impregnated with the results of the deeds of his previous life: and as the etheric body has within itself the power to bring forth what it formerly had, we shall also understand

that this etheric body will also build into the new organism that which it brings with it from previous incarnations. We shall now understand how our deeds in one life can work over into our conditions of health in the next life, and how in our state of health we have often to seek a karmic effect of deeds of a previous life.

We may approach the matter in still another way. We may ask: Does everything that we do in the life between birth and death react in the same manner on our etheric body? Even in ordinary life we can perceive a great difference on our inner organisation between the reaction of what we experience as conscious beings, and many other experiences. Here comes a very interesting fact which can be fully explained by Spiritual Science and which can also be quite reasonably understood. In the course of his life a person has a great number of experiences which he receives consciously and unites them with his Ego. Within him they develop into concepts which he works upon, etc. But a great many experiences and impressions do not come as far as to concepts, and yet they are really there in man and act upon him. If you walk along the street it often happens that someone says to you: ‘I saw you today, and you even looked at me!’ And yet you know nothing about it! This is often

the case. Of course, this has made an impression; your eyes indeed saw the other person but the direct impression did not come as far as a concept. There are innumerable cases of this sort, so that our life is really divided into two parts — into a realm of soul-life which consists of concepts, and another realm that we have never brought really into clear consciousness. There are again other differences. You will easily be able to distinguish between impressions which you have in your life and can remember, and those which you cannot remember.

Thus our soul-life is divided into entirely different categories, and there is, indeed, a very considerable difference between these various categories if we consider the effect upon the inner being of man. Let us now consider for a few minutes the life of man between birth and death. First of all we observe this great difference between the concepts which come again and again into our consciousness, and those which have been forgotten. This difference can be most easily exemplified by the following. Think of an impression which called forth a clear idea within you. Let it be an impression which aroused joy or pain, an impression which was accompanied by a feeling.

Let us bear in mind that most impressions, really all the impressions that are made upon us are accompanied by feelings and these feelings express themselves not only on the conscious surface of life, but they work down into the physical body. You need only remember how one impression will cause us to become pale, and another causes us to blush. These impressions affect the circulation of the blood. And now let us pass over to what on the whole does not come to consciousness, or only fleetingly so, and is not remembered. In this case Spiritual Science shows how these impressions are none the less accompanied by emotions in the same way as are the conscious impressions. If you receive an impression from the outer world which, if received consciously, would have frightened you so much that it would have made your heart beat, that same impression is not, however, without effect, even when unconsciously received. It not only makes an impression, but it also goes down into the physical body. It is remarkable that an impression which produces a conscious idea, finds a kind of resistance when working into the deeper human organisation; but if the impression simply acts upon us without our bringing it to a conscious idea, then nothing hinders it, and for this reason it is even more effective. Human life is much richer than the *conscious* human life.

There is a period in our life when we experience a great number of impressions which act very strongly upon the human organisation and which we are unable to remember. In the whole of the period from birth up to the moment when a person can first remember, a great number of impressions are made upon him which are all there, and which have been transformed during this time. They work, just as do the conscious impressions, but there is nothing opposed to them, especially when they are forgotten. Nothing that is otherwise contained in the soul-life in the way of conscious conception can thereby form a dam as it were, and the sub-conscious impressions are those which act most profoundly. Now in the external life one can often find proof that there are moments in human life when the second kind of inner effect is manifested. We are unable to explain many of the events in later life and we cannot discover why we have to experience one thing or another in this particular way. For example, we experience something which has such a tremendous impression upon us that we cannot explain how such a comparatively insignificant experience could make such a great impression. Now if we investigate, we shall perhaps find that exactly in that critical time between birth and the time back to which we can remember, we had a remotely similar experience, but which we have forgotten. No idea of it

has remained behind, but at the time we had an impression which affected us very much. This has lived on and now unites with the present impression, strengthening it so that what would otherwise have moved us much less or perhaps not at all now makes a particularly strong impression. If we perceive this clearly we shall be able to form an idea of the extreme importance of the impression made upon a child in its earliest years and how something may throw its very significant shadow or light on the later life. Here again, something from the earlier life works into the later life.

It may happen that these impressions of childhood — particularly if they are repeated — influence the whole disposition in such a way that from a certain point of time on, an inexplicable depression of spirit comes. This can only be accounted for when one goes back and discovers the impressions received during childhood which throw their lights or shadows into the later life, and which are now expressed in a permanent depression of spirits. Now we shall find that those events which then made particular impressions upon him work the more strongly on the child. We may say that if emotions, particularly feelings and sensations, were connected with the impressions which were later forgotten, these emotions and overflowings of feeling

are particularly effective in producing later similar experiences.

Now remember what I have often said about the life during the kamaloca period. After the etheric body has been laid aside as a second corpse, man lives the whole of his last life backwards. He goes over all the experiences which he has had, but not in such a way that he is indifferent to them. During the period in kamaloca, as man still possesses his astral body, what he has gone through brings about the most profound experiences in feeling. For example, let us suppose that a person died at the age of seventy. He lives his life back to his fortieth year when he struck a man on the face; he then experiences the pain which he gave to the other. A kind of self-reproach is thereby called forth; this then remains, so as to compensate the matter in a future life. You will understand that as in this period between death and a new birth there are all kinds of astral experiences, that which is experienced by us as an action imprints itself all the more surely and deeply into our inner being, and contributes to the construction of our new body. Thus, if even in ordinary life we are so strongly affected by certain experiences, especially if they were accompanied by feeling, that they are able to bring about later a depression of spirits, we shall understand

that the much stronger impressions of kamaloca life are able to express themselves so that they work deeply into the organisation of the physical body.

Here, then, you see a stronger form of a phenomenon which on careful observation you are able to find, even in the life between birth and death. The ideas which meet with no hindrance from the consciousness will lead to other irregularities in the soul — to neurasthenia, to various kinds of nervous diseases and perhaps also to mental diseases. All these phenomena present themselves as causal connections between earlier and later events, and furnish us with a clear picture of them.

If we now wish to go further with this idea we may say that our actions will, in the life after death, be transmuted into a powerful emotion. This emotion which is not then weakened by any physical idea, not limited by any ordinary consciousness — for the brain is not then necessary — is experienced by the other form of consciousness, which then works down more deeply. So it is brought about that our actions and the whole nature of our previous life appear in the constitution of our whole organisation in a new life. Hence we shall quite easily understand that when a person who in one incarnation has thought, felt and

acted very egotistically, sees before him after death the fruits of his egotistic thoughts, feelings and action, he is filled with strong feelings against his former deeds. This is in fact the case. He develops tendencies which are directed against his own being, and these tendencies, in so far as they have proceeded from an egotistic nature in the previous life, express themselves in a weak organisation in the new life. (The ‘weak organisation’ here refers to the being, and not to the external impression.) Therefore we must clearly understand that a weak organisation can be traced back karmically to egotism in a previous life. Let us go further.

Let us suppose that in one life a person manifests a particular tendency towards telling lies. This is a tendency which proceeds from a deeper organisation of the soul; for if a person only follows what is in his most conscious life he will not really lie. It is only emotions and feelings which work up out of his sub-consciousness which lead him to this. Here again we have something deeper. If a person is untruthful, the actions which proceed from untruthfulness will again arouse the most forcible feelings against himself in the life after death, and a profound tendency against lying will appear. He will then bring with him into the next life not only a weak organisation but — so Spiritual

Science shows us — an organisation which is incorrectly built, so to speak, and which manifests irregularly formed inner organs in the finer organisation. Something is there which does not agree and this is due to the previous tendency to lying. And whence came this tendency to lying? — for in that tendency the person already has something which also is not in order.

Here we shall have to go back still further. Spiritual Science shows that a fickle life which knows neither devotion nor love — a superficial life in one incarnation — expresses itself in the tendency to lying in the next incarnation; and in the third incarnation this tendency to lying manifests itself in incorrectly formed organs. Thus we can karmically trace the effects in three consecutive incarnations: superficiality and fickleness in the first incarnation, the tendency to lying in the second, and the physical disposition to disease in the third incarnation.

Thus we see how karma is connected with health and disease. That which has just now been said is based upon facts revealed as the result of spiritual investigation. We are not advancing theories, but actual cases which have been observed, and which can be investigated by the methods of Spiritual

Science. We commenced this lecture by referring to the most ordinary facts — the healing powers of the etheric body of the plants. We then showed how through the addition of the astral body in the animals the etheric body is less active. And we saw further how through the reception of the Ego which develops an individual life for good or evil, truth and falsehood, the astral body which, in the case of the higher animals only hinders the healing power, again adds something new to man, namely the karmic influences of disease which flow into him out of the individual life. In the plant there are no inner causes of disease, because disease is still something outside, and the healing powers work without being weakened. In the lower animals we find an etheric body but such healing powers that it can even replace certain parts; but the further we rise the more does the astral body imprint itself into the etheric body and thereby limit its healing powers. The animals do not survive in reincarnations; therefore that which is in the etheric body is not connected with any moral, intellectual or individual qualities, but only with the common type. In man, however, that which he experiences in his Ego works down into the etheric body. Why then do the experiences of childhood in the realm of feeling we have mentioned manifest themselves only in light diseases? Because we are able to find in the same life

the causes of much that manifests itself as neurasthenia, neurosis, hysteria. But we shall have to look for the causes of severer cases of disease in the moral causes set up in the previous life because that which is experienced morally and intellectually can only be fully implanted in the etheric body on passing over to a new birth. On the whole, the etheric body of man cannot embody the deeper moral activities in one life, although we shall still hear of exceptional cases, and indeed of very important ones.

Such is the connection which exists between our life of good or evil, our moral and intellectual life in one incarnation, and our health or disease in the next.

4. The Curability and Incurability of Diseases in Relation to Karma

IT may be presumed, in regard to the two ideas which are to form the subject of our present lecture, namely, the curability and incurability of diseases, that there will be clearer conceptions and — one might say — concepts more acceptable to humanity, when the ideas of karma and karmic connections in life have gained ground in wider circles. One may indeed say that in regard to the ideas of the curability and incurability of diseases there have been various opinions in different centuries, and one need not go so very far back to find how greatly these have changed.

We find a time at the turning point between the Middle Ages and modern times, about the sixteenth to the seventeenth century, when the idea gradually gained ground that forms of disease could be strictly limited, and that for every disease there was some sort of herb or mixture by which the disease in question could be cured. This belief lasted for a long time, even into the nineteenth century, and when we as laymen, or as those who have accepted the ideas of the present day, read of the treatment of disease from the end of the eighteenth or the beginning of the

nineteenth centuries and for some time later, we are astonished at the remedies and recipes which were largely used at that time: teas, mixtures, more dangerous medicines, blood-letting, etc.

In the nineteenth century this view was reversed into the exact opposite in medical circles, and indeed in distinguished medical circles. I may say that during the earlier years of my life many of these opposing views came before me in various forms. The opportunity for this came to all who followed the progress of the ‘nihilistic school of medicine’ which was started in Vienna about the middle of the nineteenth century and which won more and more favour. The commencement of a radical change in the views on the curability and incurability of diseases was due to what the renowned physician Dietel brought to light in regard to pneumonia and similar diseases. From all kinds of observations he came to the conclusion that fundamentally there is absolutely no real effect to be noticed from the use of various remedies on the course of this or that disease. Under the influence of the school of Dietel, the young doctors of that day learned to think of the healing value of the remedies which had been used for centuries in such a way that they almost outdid what is conveyed in the well-known saying: — ‘When the cock crows on the

dung-heap the weather will change — or it will remain as it is!' They were of the opinion that it made little difference to the course of this or that disease whether one administered a certain remedy or not. Now Dietel was one who, for that period, collected very convincing statistics showing that in his so-called 'wait and see' treatment, approximately as many people who were suffering from pneumonia were cured or died as was the case in the earlier treatment with time-honoured remedies. The waiting treatment founded by Dietel, and continued by Skoda consisted in bringing the patient into a condition in which he was best able to stimulate the self-healing powers and to draw them forth from his organism. The doctor had little more to do than watch the course of the disease and to be at hand if anything happened, so that he could give practical help with human needs. For the rest, he confined himself to watching the disease come, so to speak, and waiting to see how the self-healing forces came out of the organism, until after a time the fever subsided and self-healing came about.

This school of medicine was called, and is still called, 'The Nihilistic School,' because it rested on a statement by Professor Skoda who said approximately: — 'We may perhaps learn to diagnose diseases, to describe them, perhaps even explain them, but we

cannot heal them!’ I give you these details of developments in the course of the nineteenth century so that you may realise how ideas have changed on this subject. But because this or that is related in purely narrative form it is not implied that you should take sides in any way, for obviously the statement of the celebrated Professor Skoda was a kind of radicalism, the limits of which are quite easy to define. There was, however, one point or aspect which was repeatedly emphasised by this particular school of medicine. Although they had no means of proving it and had not even the words to describe exactly the content of their conception they repeatedly affirmed that there must be in man some element which determines the appearance and the course of his illness, and which is fundamentally beyond the reach of any human intervention.

Thus a reference was made to something beyond human aid; and if one really goes to the bottom of these things, this indication cannot relate to anything other than the law of karma and its activity in human life. If we follow the course of a disease in human life, how it develops, and how the healing powers spring forth from the organism itself; if we follow the process of healing impartially — particularly if we reflect how in one case a cure takes place, while in another it fails

— we shall then be driven to search for a deeper law determining this. Can this deeper law be sought for in the previous earth-life of man? That is a question for us. Can we say that a person brings with him certain predispositions which in one particular case called forth the healing powers from his organism, but which in another case, in spite of every effort, held these forces back?

It will be remembered from the last lecture that in the events which take place between death and a new birth, particular forces are taken into the human individuality. During the period in kamaloca the events of a person’s last life, the good and evil deeds he has done, the qualities of his character, etc., come before his soul, and through the vision of his own life he acquires the tendency to bring about the remedy and compensation for all that is imperfect in him and which has manifested as wrong action. He is moved to acquire those qualities which will bring him nearer to perfection in various directions. He forms intentions and tendencies during the time up to a new birth, and goes into existence again with these intentions. Further, he himself works upon the new body which he acquires for his new life, and he builds in conformity with the forces he has brought from previous earthly lives, and from the time between death and re-birth.

He is furnished with these forces, and builds them into his new body. From this it may be seen that this new body will be weak or strong according as the person is in the position to build weak or strong forces into it.

Now it must be clearly understood that a certain consequence will come when, for example, during the life in kamaloca, a person sees that in the last life, he did many actions under the influence of the emotions of anger, fear, aversion, etc. These actions now stand vividly before his soul in kamaloca, and in his soul is formed the thought (the expressions which we have to use for these forces are of course coined from the physical life): ‘You must do something to yourself, so that you will become more perfect in this respect, so that in the future you will no longer be inclined to commit such actions under the dominance of your emotions.’ This thought becomes an integral part of the human-soul individuality, and during the passage through to a new birth, it is imprinted still further as a force in the new body. Thus this new body is penetrated with the tendency so to act on the whole organisation of the physical body, the etheric body and astral body, that it will be prevented from performing certain actions resulting from the emotions of anger, hate, envy, etc. He will be impelled to fresh actions which will compensate for previous ones. Thus

from a reason which extends far beyond his ordinary rationality, the person is imbued with a strong desire for a higher perfection in certain directions, and with the desire also to compensate for certain deeds. If we consider how manifold life is, and how day by day we perform actions which require compensation of this sort, we shall understand that when the soul enters into a next existence on earth, it contains many such thoughts waiting to be balanced, and that these manifold thoughts and tendencies cross one another, making the human physical body and etheric body receive a complex warp and woof of such tendencies and desires. To illustrate this, let us take a striking case, and I must again repeat that I avoid speaking from any sort of theory or hypothesis, and that when I give examples I give only those that have been tested by Spiritual Science.

Let us suppose that in his previous life a person acted from an Ego-feeling which was much too weak, and which allowed of too much influence from the outer world — so much so that it gave to his actions a lack of independence, a lack of character which no longer fits the present state of humanity. Thus it was this lack of feeling of self which led him in one incarnation to perform certain actions. During the kamaloca period, he had before him the actions which

have proceeded from this atrophy of his Ego and from this he acquires the tendency: ‘You must develop within you forces which increase your feeling of personality; in your next incarnation you must seek for opportunities to strengthen this feeling, to train it, as it were, against the opposition of your body, against the forces which will come to you in your next incarnation from your physical body, etheric body and astral body. You must make a body which will show you the consequences of a weak personality.’

The effect of this in the next incarnation will not be able fully to enter into the consciousness; it will run its course more or less in a sub-conscious region. The person in question will strive for an incarnation in which he will encounter the greatest opposition to his Ego-consciousness, so that he has to exert these feelings to the highest degree. This striving draws him, as if magnetically, to places and circumstances where he meets with great hindrances, so that his Ego is stimulated into action in opposition to the organisation of the three bodies. Strange as it may sound, the individualities who have this karma, coming into existence by birth in the way we have described, seek opportunities where, for instance, they will be exposed to an epidemic such as cholera, for this gives them the opportunity of meeting with the

opposition we have described above. The activity which is thus experienced in the inner being of the person who is ill owing to the opposition of the three bodies, can then so work that in the next incarnation his feeling of self will be much stronger.

Let us take another striking instance, and so that we may perceive the connection, we will purposely take exactly the opposite case. During the kamaloca period, a person sees that he has acted from too strong a feeling of self. He sees that he must be more temperate as regards this feeling and that he must subdue it. So he will seek an opportunity whereby in the next incarnation his threefold organism will so condition him that his Ego-consciousness, however much it strives, will find no limitations, and he will he led to the unfathomable and to absurdity. These opportunities come to him when karma brings him malaria.

Here you have a case of disease brought about by karma which explains that fundamentally man is led by a higher kind of reason than he perceives with his ordinary consciousness to circumstances which in the course of his karma are favourable to his development. If we bear in mind what has just been said, we shall find it much easier to understand the epidemic nature

of diseases. We could bring forward many different examples showing how, because of his experience in the kamaloca period, a man actually seeks for the opportunity to get a certain illness, in order that by overcoming it and by developing the self-healing forces, he may gain strength and power which will lead him upward on the path of evolution.

I said previously that if a person has done many things under the influence of his passions, he will in the kamaloca period live through actions which have also come about under such an influence. This will arouse in him the tendency in his next incarnation to experience some obstacle in his own body and by overcoming this, he will be in the position to compensate for certain actions in his previous life. Especially is this the case in the form of illness which in these modern times we call diptheric, which in many cases appears when there is a karmic complication due to previous acts which were dominated by the emotions and passions.

In the course of these lectures, we shall have to speak on the causes of various illnesses, but we must now go still more deeply if we wish to answer the question: ‘If a person enters into existence in such a way that, through his karma, he brings with him the

tendency whereby he overcomes suffering to gain some other thing, how, then, does it come about that one succeeds in overcoming the disease and acquiring forces which bring him higher, while another succumbs, and the disease is the victor?’ Here we have to go back to the spiritual principles which allow disease to be possible in human life.

If a man can fall ill, and can through karma even seek illness — this is due to a certain principle that has come already before us in our studies of Spiritual Science. We know that at a certain point in the Earth’s evolution there penetrated into the development of humanity the forces we call luciferic, which belong to beings who remained behind during the ancient Moon evolution, and who did not advance far enough to reach, as it were, the normal point of their development. Thereby was implanted into the astral body of man, before his Ego could work in the proper manner, a principle which streamed from these luciferic beings. So the influence of these beings was once exercised on man’s astral body, and he has retained it throughout his evolution. This influence plays a great part in human evolution; but for our present task it is important to point out that as a result of these forces, he had within him that which led him to be less perfect than he would otherwise have been

if such influence had not come. It also gave him the tendency to act and judge more from his emotions, passions and desires, than he would have done if the luciferic influence had not entered. This influence produced a change in the real individuality of man who became more subject to what we may call ‘World of Desire’ than would otherwise have been the case, and it is because of this influence that man has become much more identified with the physical earthly world than he would otherwise have been. Through the luciferic influence man has entered more into his body and has identified himself more with it, for if the influence of the luciferic beings had not been there, many of the things that allure man to desire this or that would not have come. Man would have been quite indifferent to these allurements. But allurements of the external world of the senses came through this influence of Lucifer, and man yielded to them. The individuality which was given by the Ego was permeated with the activities proceeding from the luciferic principle, and so it came about that in his first incarnation on earth man succumbed to the allurements of the luciferic principle, and carried these enticements with him into later lives. We can say that the way in which he succumbed to the allurements of the luciferic principle, became an integral part of his karma.

Now, if man had taken only this principle into himself he would have succumbed more and more to the allurements of the physical earth world; he would gradually have been obliged to resign the prospect of breaking loose again from this world. We know that the Christ influence which came later opposed the luciferic principle and balanced it again, as it were, so that in the course of evolution man again received the means by which to rid himself of the luciferic influence. But with this influence something else was given at the same time. The fact that this influence had penetrated into his astral body made the whole of the external world into which he entered appear different to him. Lucifer entered into the inner being of man, who then saw the world around him through Lucifer. His vision of the earthly world was thereby clouded and his external impressions were mingled with what we call the ahrimanic influence. Ahriman could only insinuate himself and make the external world into illusion because we had previously created from within the tendency towards illusion and maya. Thus the ahrimanic influence which came into the external world was a consequence of the luciferic influence. We may say that when once the luciferic forces were there, man enmeshed himself more in the sense-world than he would have done without this influence; but thereby he absorbed the ahrimanic

influence with every external perception. Thus in the human individuality which goes through incarnations on the earth, there is a luciferic influence, and, as a result of this, the ahrimanic influence. These two powers are continually fighting in the human individuality which has become their field of battle.

Man in his ordinary consciousness is still exposed to the allurements of Lucifer which work from the passions and emotions of his astral body; also he is subject to the enticements of Ahriman which come to him from outside in the way of error, deception, etc., in regard to the outer world. As long as a person is incarnated on the earth his ideas put an obstacle in the way, so that what comes from Lucifer and Ahriman cannot penetrate deeper, but finds a hindrance in his concepts, his acts being subservient to his moral or intellectual judgement. But when a person between birth and death sins against morality in following Lucifer, or against logic or sound thinking in following Ahriman, that concerns only his ordinary conscious soul life. When, on the other hand, he passes through the portal of death, the life of idea which is bound to the instrument of the brain ceases, and a different form of consciousness begins; then, all the things which in the life between birth and death were submitted to the moral or rational judgement,

penetrate down into the foundation of the human being, into that which, after kamaloca, organises the next existence and imprints itself into the plastic forces, which then construct a threefold human body. Errors resulting from devotion to Ahriman develop into forces of disease which affect man through his etheric body. Faults which were the object of a moral judgement between birth and death develop into causes of disease which work more from the astral body.

From this we see how, in fact, our errors from the ahrimanic forces within us, including such voluntary errors as lies, etc., develop into causes of disease, if we do not merely consider the one incarnation, but observe the effect of one incarnation on the next. We see also how the luciferic influences in the same way become the causes of disease, and we may in fact say, ‘our errors do not go unpunished. We bear the stamp of our errors in our next incarnation.’ But we do this from a higher reason than that of our ordinary consciousness — from a consciousness which during the period between death and a new birth directs us to make ourselves so strong that we shall no longer be exposed to these temptations. Thus in our life, disease even plays the part of a great teacher. If we study illnesses in this way we shall see unmistakably that an

illness is a manifestation of either luciferic or ahrimanic influences. When these things are understood by those who under the guidance of Spiritual Science wish to become physicians, the influence of these healers on the human organism will be infinitely more profound than it can be today.

We can examine certain forms of disease from this standpoint. Let us take pneumonia for example; it is a karmic effect which follows when during his life in kamaloca the person in question looks back to a character which had within it the tendency towards sexual excess, and a desire to live a sensual life. Do not confuse what is now ascribed to a previous consciousness with what appears in the consciousness in the following incarnation. This is quite a different matter. Indeed, that which a person sees during his life in kamaloca will so transform itself that forces are imprinted in him by means of which he will overcome pneumonia. For it is exactly in the overcoming of this disease, in the self-healing which is then striven for that the human individuality acts in opposition to the luciferic powers and wages a pitched battle against them. Therefore in the overcoming of pneumonia is given the opportunity to lay aside that which was a defect in the character in a previous incarnation. In

this complaint we see unmistakably the war of man against the luciferic powers.

Now the case is different in the so-called ‘tuberculosis of the lungs,’ when we see the singular phenomenon whereby the self-healing forces become active, and the injurious influences are surrounded and framed in by a calcareous matter with a tissue which is then filled in and which forms solid concretions. A person may have these concretions in his lungs, and many more people have such things than is usually supposed, for these are the persons in whom a tuberculous lung has been healed. Where such a thing has taken place, a war has been waged by the human inner being against what the ahrimanic forces have produced. It is a defensive process from within against what has been brought about by external materiality, in order to lead to the independence of the human being in this special sense.

We have shown how, in fact, the two principles — the ahrimanic and the luciferic — are at work at the very foundation of a disease. And in many ways it can be pointed out that in the various forms of disease one distinguishes essentially two types, the ahrimanic and the luciferic. If this were considered, the true

principles would be discovered by which to find a suitable remedy for the patient; for luciferic diseases will require entirely different remedies from the ahrimanic. To-day external forces are used for the purposes of healing in a way which betrays a certain want of judgement — forces such as electro-therapy, the cold water treatment, etc. Much light could be thrown by Spiritual Science on the suitability of one method or another, if it were first decided whether a luciferic or ahrimanic illness is being treated. For example, electro-therapeutics ought not to be used in illnesses which originate from luciferic causes, but only in ahrimanic forms of illness. For electricity, which has no connection whatever with the activities of Lucifer, is useless in treating luciferic forms of disease; it belongs to the sphere of the ahrimanic beings, although, of course, other beings beside the ahrimanic make use of the forces of electricity. On the other hand, warmth and cold belong to the sphere of Lucifer. Everything which has to do with making the human body warmer or colder, or that which makes it warmer or colder through external influences, belongs to the sphere of Lucifer; and in all the cases in which we have to deal with warmth or cold we have a type of luciferic form of disease.

From this we see how karma works in illness and how it works to overcome illness. It will now no longer seem incomprehensible that in karma there also lies the curability or incurability of a disease. If we clearly understand that the aim — the karmic aim of illness is the progress and the improvement of man, we must presume that if a man in accordance with the wisdom which he brings with him into this existence from the kamaloca period contracts a disease, he then develops the healing forces which involve a strengthening of his inner forces and the possibility of rising higher. Let us suppose that man in the life before him, owing to his other organism and his remaining karma were, to have the force of progressing during this life itself by means of that which he has acquired through illness. Then the healing has an object. The person comes forth healed from the illness, having gained what he was to gain. Through the conquest of the illness he has acquired perfect forces where previously he had imperfect forces. If through his karma he is equipped with such powers, and if through the favourable circumstances of his former fate he is so placed in the world that he can use the new forces, and can work so as to be of use to himself and others, then healing comes about and he recovers.

Now let us suppose a case in which a person overcomes a disease, develops the healing forces, and then is confronted with a life which exacts from him a degree of perfection he has not yet gained. He would, indeed, gain something through the conquered disease, but it is, however, impossible — because the rest of his karma does not admit it — with the little he has gained to assist others. Then it comes about that his deeper subconsciousness says: — ‘Here you have no opportunity of receiving the full force of what you really ought to have. You had to go into this incarnation to gain the degree of perfection which you can only attain in the physical body by overcoming the disease. That you had to acquire; but you cannot develop it further. You have now to go into conditions in which your physical body and the other forces do not disturb you, where you can freely work out what you have gained through the illness.’ Such an individual seeks for death so as to use further, between death and another birth, what he cannot use in life. Such a soul goes through the phase between death and re-birth in order to construct an organisation with the stronger forces it has gained by overcoming disease. In this way through the presence of an illness, a payment on account, as it were, may be made, and the payment is completed after passing through death.

When we consider the matter in this way we shall say: It undoubtedly seems to be founded on karma that one illness ends in being cured and another terminates in death. If we see illnesses terminated in this way, we shall obtain through karma, from a higher standpoint a kind of reconciliation, a profound reconciliation with life; for we shall know that it lies within the law of karma that — even if an illness terminates in death — man progresses, and that even in such a case the illness has the object of bringing the person higher. Now no one must draw from this the conclusion that we ought to wish that death should take place in certain cases of illness. No one may say this, because the decision regarding what ought to happen, whether healing or otherwise, belongs to a higher power of judgement than the one included in our ordinary consciousness. In the world which lies between birth and death, and with our ordinary consciousness, we must humbly let such questions stand over. With our higher consciousness we may, however, even take the standpoint that death is the gift of the higher spiritual powers. But that consciousness which is to help and set to work in life must not presume to place itself along with this higher consciousness, for we might then easily err and we should interfere unjustifiably in something which must never be interfered with, namely, the sphere of human

freedom. If we can help a person to develop the self-healing forces, or assist him to aid nature, so that a cure may come about, we must do it. And if the question should arise as to whether the patient ought to live on further, or whether he would be more helped if he died, our assistance must nevertheless always be given towards healing. If this is done we help the human individuality to use its own powers, and the medical assistance only supports him in this. It does not work into the human individuality. It would be quite different if we were to help on an incurable disease in a person in order that he should seek his further progress in another world. We should then interfere with his individuality, and deliver this up to another sphere of action. We should be imposing our will upon the other and we must leave this to the other individual himself. In other words, we must do everything possible for him to be cured; for all the deliberation which leads to a cure comes from the consciousness which is ripe for our Earth, and all other measures would reach beyond our Earth sphere. Other forces than those which belong to our ordinary consciousness would then have to work.

Thus we see that a true karmic understanding concerning the curability and incurability of disease leads to our doing everything possible to help the

person who is ill, and, on the other hand, it also leads to our being comforted if a different decision comes from another sphere. We do not require anything else as regards this other decision. It is necessary for us to find a point of view from which the incurability of a disease does not depress us, as though the world contained only what is imperfect and evil. The conception of karma does not paralyse our activities in regard to healing. On the contrary, it will again bring us into harmony with regard to the hardest fate, with regard to the incurability of a certain illness.

Thus we have seen today how the understanding of karma alone makes it possible for us to comprehend the course of an illness in the right way, and to understand that in our present life we see the karmic effects of our previous life. Detailed examples will be given later when we discuss the other subject. We have now to distinguish between illnesses which come from the inner being of man, which appear as the result of karma, and those illnesses which come to us apparently by chance, through our being exposed to some accident or other. In brief, we shall now see how we may arrive at a karmic understanding of accidents, as, for example, when one falls under the wheels of a railway train. How are we to understand so-called accidents in connection with karma?

5. Natural and Accidental Illness in Relationship to Karma

THE contents of the last lecture are most important for our next consideration as well as for a comprehension of karmic connection in general. For this reason, because of its extreme importance, allow me to recapitulate the chief points.

We began by saying that views concerning cures and medicines have in the course of a relatively short time, during the last century, undergone a radical change. We pointed to the fact that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that view was developed which was based entirely upon the theory that for every illness which was given a name, and which it was believed could be strictly defined, some remedy must exist upon earth. And it was firmly believed that by the use of the remedy in question the course of the illness must be influenced. We then pointed out that view prevailed more or less until the nineteenth century, and side by side with this we showed the complete reversal of this opinion which found expression chiefly in the nihilism of the Viennese school, founded by the famous medical man Dietel, and carried on by Skoda and his disciples. We

characterised the nihilistic current of thought by saying that it not merely harboured doubts as to the existence of any absolute connection between one remedy or another, one manipulation or another in respect to the treatment of illness and the illness itself, but would no longer concern itself with any such connection. The idea of the so-called ‘self-healing’ penetrated the minds of the young doctors influenced by this school. Skoda himself made the following significant statement to this school: ‘We may be able to diagnose an illness, to explain, and perhaps also to describe it, but remedy for it we have none.’ This point of view originated from the proofs furnished by Dietel to the effect that, given the necessary conditions, an illness such as pneumonia will with temporising treatment take such course as to develop self-healing forces at the end of certain period. By means of statistics he was able to prove that a temporising treatment showed neither fewer cures nor more deaths than the remedies ordinarily in use. At that time the term ‘therapeutic nihilism’ was not without justification, for it is quite true that the doctors of this school were powerless against the patient’s conviction that there simply must exist a remedy, a prescription. The patient would not yield, nor would his friends. A remedy had to be prescribed, and the disciples of this school got out of the difficulty by prescribing a thin

solution of gum arabic, which according to their opinion would have the same effect as the remedies previously in use. From this we have learnt how the modern scientific world is moving in the direction of what we may call the karmic connections of life. For they had now to find an answer to the question: how is that which we may call ‘self-healing’ brought about? Or better, why does it take place? And why in some cases can there be no self-healing or cure of any kind?

If a whole school led by medical authorities resorts to the introduction of the idea of self-healing, we must arrive at the conclusion that something is invoked in the course of an illness which leads to the conquest of the illness. And this would have induced us to pursue the more secret reasons for the course of the illness. We have attempted to point out how such a karmic connection with the course of an illness may be sought for in the development of humanity. We showed that indeed what we accomplish in our ordinary lives in regard to good or evil deeds, or wise or foolish deeds, what we experience in regard to right or wrong emotions, that all this does not go deeply into the foundation of the human organism. And we have shown the reason why what is subject to the moral, intellectual, or emotional judgement in ordinary life remains at the surface, and is not subject to the

law which we could trace in another instance — a law which influences the deeper lying forces of the human organism. We demonstrated that in this way there exists a sort of hindrance preventing immorality from entering into the deeper forces of our organism. And this barrier against the penetration by our acts and thoughts into the deeper forces of our organism, consists in the fact that our deeds and our emotions accomplished between birth and death are accompanied by our conscious concepts. In so far as we accompany an act or any other experience by a conscious concept, so far do we provide a defence against the result of our deeds sinking down into our organism.

We have also pointed out the significance of those experiences that have been irrevocably forgotten. It is no longer possible to bring them back to the life of our conscious perceptions, but those experiences, because the defence of the conception is lacking, penetrate in a definite way into our inner organism and there co-operate with the formative forces of our organism. And we are able to point to those forms of disease which lie nearer the surface, such as neurosis, neurasthenia, and so forth. A light is thrown even upon hysterical conditions. As we said, the cause of such conditions must be sought for in the concepts

that have been forgotten, which have fallen out of the complex of consciousness and have sunk down into the inner soul-life where, as a sort of wedge, they assert themselves in the form of disease. We further pointed out the tremendous significance of the period which lies between birth and the time when we first begin to remember our experiences; and our attention was drawn to the fact that what at an earlier stage has been forgotten continues to be active within our living organism, forming, as it were, an alliance with the deeper forces of our organism, and thereby influencing our organism itself. As we see, a complex of conceptions, a number of experiences must sink down into the deeper foundations of our being before they can intervene in our organism. We then pointed out that this sinking down is most thorough when we have passed through the gate of death and are experiencing the further existence between death and re-birth. The quality of all experiences is then transformed into forces which now develop an organising activity, and the feelings which we have experienced during the period between death and re-birth will become part of the plastic forces, the formative forces that take part in the rebuilding of the body when we return into a new life. In these formative forces man now carries within him the result of what at an earlier stage he held within his soul-life,

perhaps even in his conscious conceptions. And further we could point to the fact that man with his conscious conceptions permeated by the Ego oscillates between two influences present in the world — between the luciferic and the ahrimanic influences. When owing to the characteristics of our astral body we have done wrong through evil passions, temper, and so forth, we are driven thereto by luciferic forces. Such deeds then take the course we have described, if they are transformed into formative forces, they will be dwelling as causes of luciferic disease within the formative forces, and will lay the foundations of our new body. We have further seen that we are subject also to the ahrimanic forces which affect us more from outside. And again we had to admit, concerning the ahrimanic forces, that they are transformed into formative forces, into forces shaping the newly built organism when man enters existence through birth, and in so far as the ahrimanic influences mingle with the formative forces, so far we may speak of ahrimanic predisposition to disease. We then pointed out in detail how the forces act, that are thus developed. I quoted some radical examples of this activity, because in radical examples the picture is more distinct, more clearly defined. I gave the person who in his previous life had at all times acted in such a way as to produce a weak Ego-consciousness and weak self-reliance, and

whose Ego attached little value to itself, becoming absorbed only in generalities and so forth. Such a person will after death develop the tendency to absorb forces that will render him capable of strengthening and perfecting his ego in his further incarnation. As a result of this he will seek conditions that will give him an opportunity of fighting against certain resistances, so that his weak Ego-consciousness may be strengthened through resistance. Such a tendency will lead him to seek an opportunity of contracting cholera, because in this he will face something that offers an opportunity of conquering those resistances, in the conquest of which he will be led in his next incarnation, or even should a cure be effected in this same incarnation, to a stronger Ego-consciousness or to forces which will by way of self-education lead him gradually to a stronger Ego-consciousness. We have further stated that an illness such as malaria affords an opportunity of compensating for the overbearing Ego-consciousness which has been engendered by the soul in an earlier life through its deeds and emotions.

Those of us who took part in our earlier anthroposophical studies will understand such a course. It has always been said that man’s Ego finds its physical expression in its blood. Now both of these illnesses which have just been mentioned are

connected with blood and the laws of blood. They are so connected that in the case of cholera there is a thickening of the blood which can be regarded as the ‘resistance’ which a weak self-reliance must experience, and by means of which it is trying to develop. We shall also be able to understand that in a case of malaria we are faced with an impoverishment of the blood, and that an over-developed Ego-consciousness needs the opportunity of being led to an impossible extreme. This impoverishment of the blood of an over-developed Ego will find all its efforts ending in annihilation. Naturally these things stand in an intimate relationship to our organism, but if we examine them, we shall find them comprehensible.

The result of all this is that when we are dealing with an organism formed by a soul that has brought with it the tendency to overcome some imperfection in one or another direction, man will tend to become impregnated with a predisposition to a certain illness, but, at the same time he will have the capacity for fighting this illness which is produced for no other reason than to provide the means of a cure. And a cure will be effected when the person, in accordance with his whole karma acquires through the conquest of the illness, such forces as will enable him through the rest of his life to make true progress by means of his work

upon the physical plane. In other words, if the stimulating forces are so strong that man is able to acquire upon the physical plane itself those qualities, on account of which the illness broke out, then he will be able to work with that reinforced power which he lacked before, and which he gained from the healing process. But if it is in our karma that we have the desire to mould our organism so that through the conquest of the illness in question it should acquire forces which lead nearer to perfection, and yet because of the complexity of the causes we are forced to leave our organism weak in another direction, then it may be that although the forces we develop and make use of in the healing process strengthen us, they do not do so sufficiently to make us equal to our work upon the physical plane. Then because what we have already gained cannot be used upon the physical plane, it will be made use of when we pass through the gate of death, and we shall try to add to our forces what we could not achieve upon the physical plane. So these forces will mature in the formation of the next body when we return to earth in a new incarnation.

Bearing this in mind one more indication should be given which deals with those forms of illness leading neither to a real cure nor to death but to chronic

conditions, to a kind of languishing state. Here we have something of which the knowledge is of the greatest importance for most people. When one has recovered from an illness, the effect sought for has been obtained and in a certain sense the illness has been conquered. But in another sense this may not be the fact. For instance, the trouble which was produced between the etheric body and the physical body has disappeared, but the disharmony between the etheric body and the astral body still exists, and we oscillate between attempts at cure and our inability to effect a cure. In such a case it is of special importance that we should make use of all that we have attained in the way of a real cure. And this is what is very rarely done for it is precisely in the case of those illnesses that become chronic that we find ourselves in a vicious circle. We should find a way out of the difficulty if in such a case we could isolate that part of our organism that has achieved a certain cure, if we could let it live by itself and withdraw from the healthy part the rest which is still in disturbance and disorder on account of what is in the soul. But many things oppose this, and chiefly the fact that when we have had an illness resulting in a chronic condition, we are living all the time under the influence of that condition, and, if I may thus crudely express myself, we can never really completely forget our condition, never really arrive at

a withdrawing of that which is not yet healthy, so as to treat it by itself. On the contrary, through thinking continually about the sickly part of our organism, we bring as it were our healthy part into some kind of relationship with the sickness and thus irritate it anew. This is a special process, and in order to make it clearer I should like to explain one of the facts proved by Spiritual Science, that can be seen by clairvoyant consciousness when a person has gone through an illness, and has retained something which may be termed chronic. The same occurs also when there exists no apparent acute illness, but when a chronic disease is developed without any acute state having been specially noticed. In most of these cases it is possible to see that there is an unstable state of balance between the etheric and the physical body, an abnormal oscillation to and fro of the forces, but in spite of which the body still remains alive. This oscillation of forces which appertain to the etheric body and the physical body bring about in the person a continual state of irritation which leads to continuous excitability. Clairvoyant consciousness sees this agitation transmitted to the astral body, and these states of excitability continually force their way into that part of the organism which is partly ill and partly well, thereby creating not a stable but an unstable balance. Through this penetration by astral

excitability, the health which would otherwise be much better is in fact greatly impaired. I must beg of you to remember that in this case the astral does not coincide with consciousness, but rather with an excitability of the inner soul, which the patient does not wish to admit even to himself. Because in such cases the barrier of consciousness is lacking, those conditions and passions, emotional crises, continual states of weariness of mind and inner discontent do not always act as do conscious forces, but rather like the organising forces. Seated within our deeper being they continually irritate that part which is half ill and half well. If the patient by means of a strong discipline of the soul could forget his condition for some time at least, he would gain such satisfaction from this, that even from this satisfaction itself he could derive the necessary force to carry on further. If he could forget his state completely and develop the strong will which will help him to say: ‘I will not bother with my condition,’ certain soul forces would thereby become liberated, and if he applied them to something spiritual that would elevate him and satisfy his inner soul, if he liberated the forces that are continuously occupied with the sensation of aches and pains, oppression and so on he would thereby gain great satisfaction. For if we do not live through these feelings, the forces are free and they are at our

disposal. Naturally it will not be of much use merely to say we don’t want to take notice of these aches and pains, for if we do not put these liberated forces to spiritual use, the former conditions will soon return. If, however, we employ these liberated forces for a spiritual purpose which will absorb the soul, we shall soon discover that we are attaining in a complicated way that which our organism would otherwise have attained without our assistance through the conquest of the illness. Naturally the person in question would have to be aware of filling his soul with something directly connected with his illness or with that which constitutes his illness. For instance, if someone suffering from a weakness of the eyes were to read a great deal so as to avoid thinking of this, he would naturally not arrive at his goal. But it is quite unnecessary to resort to further illustrations. We have all noticed how useful it is when we are slightly indisposed, to be able to forget that indisposition, especially if we gain this forgetfulness by occupying ourselves with something different. Such is a positive and wholesome forgetfulness. This already suggests to us that we are not entirely impotent in face of the karmic effects of those transgressions of our earlier lives which are expressed in the form of illness. We recognise that what is subject to moral, emotional and intellectual judgement during life between birth and

death cannot penetrate so deeply during one single life as to become the cause of an organic disease, but that in the period between death and re-birth it may penetrate so deeply into the human essence as to cause disease; then there must also exist a possibility of re-transforming these processes into conscious processes.

The question might be put thus: If illnesses are the karmic results of spiritual or other events called forth or experienced by the soul, if they are the metamorphosis of such causes, might we not then also suppose that the result of the metamorphosis, namely, the illness, might be avoided — or do we learn nothing of this from spiritual facts? Might it not be avoided if we could replace, for the good of our education, the healing processes which are drawn from the organism to combat the disease. Could we not replace these by their spiritual counterpart, their spiritual equivalent? Should we not thus, if we were sufficiently wise, transform illness into a spiritual process and accomplish through our soul forces the self-education that would otherwise be accomplished through illness?

The feasibility of this may be demonstrated by an example. Here again we must insist that only those

examples are given which have been investigated by Spiritual Science. They are not hypothetical assertions but actual ‘cases.’ A certain person contracts measles in later life, and we seek for the karmic connection in this case. We find that this case of measles appeared as the karmic effect of occurrences in a preceding life — occurrences that may be thus described: In a preceding life the individuality in question disliked concerning himself with the external world but occupied himself a great deal with himself, though not in the ordinary egotistical sense. He investigated much, meditated much, though not with regard to the facts of the external world, but confined himself to the inner soul life. We meet many people to-day who believe that through self-concentration and through brooding within themselves, they will arrive at the solution of world riddles. The person in question thought he could order his life through inner meditation how to act in one instance or another without accepting any teaching from others. The weakness of the soul resulting from this led to the formation of forces during existence between death and re-birth which exposed the organism comparatively late in life to an attack of measles.

We might now ask: if on the one hand we have the attack of measles which is the physical karmic effect

of an earlier life, how is it then with the soul? For the earlier life will also result through karmic action in a certain condition of the soul.

This soul condition will prove itself to be such that the personality in question, during the life in which the attack of measles took place, was again and again subject to self-deception. Thus in the self-deception we must see the psychic karmic result of this earlier life, and in the attack of measles the physical karmic result.

Let us now assume that this personality before developing measles had succeeded in gaining such soul forces that he was no longer exposed to all kinds of self-deception, having completely corrected this failing. In this case the acquired soul force would render the attack of measles quite unnecessary, since the tendencies brought forth in this organism during its formation had been effaced through the stronger soul forces acquired by self-education. If we contemplate life as a whole and examine in detail our experiences, considering them always from this standpoint, we should invariably find that external knowledge will bear out in every detail what has here been stated. And what I have said about a case of measles can lead to an explanation why measles is

one of the illnesses of child-hood. For the failings I have mentioned are present in a great many lives and especially in certain periods did they prevail in many lives. When such a personality enters existence he will be anxious to make the corresponding correction as soon as possible. In the period between birth and the general appearance of children’s complaints which effect an organic self-education, there can as a rule be no question of any education of the soul.

From this we see that in a certain respect we can really speak of a disease being transformed back into a spiritual process. And it is most significant that when this process has entered the soul as a life principle, it will evoke a viewpoint that has a healing effect upon the soul. We need not be surprised that in our time we are able to influence the soul so little. Anyone regarding our present period from the standpoint of Spiritual Science will understand why so many medical men, so many doctors become materialists. For most people never occupy themselves with anything which has vital force. All the stuff produced today is devoid of vital force for the soul. That is why anyone wishing to work for Spiritual Science feels in this anthroposophical activity something extremely wholesome, for Spiritual Science can again bring to men something which enters the soul so that it is

drawn away from what is acting in the physical organism. But we must not confuse what appears at the beginning of such a movement as Anthroposophy with what this movement can be in reality. Things may be brought into the Anthroposophical Movement which prevail in the physical world, for people on becoming Anthroposophists often bring to Anthroposophy exactly the same interests and also all the bad habits which they had outside. There is thus brought in much of the degeneracy of our age, and when some such degeneracy appears in the persons in question, the world says that this is the result of Anthroposophy. That is of course a cheap statement.

If we now see the karmic thread passing from one incarnation to another, we grasp only the one aspect of truth. For anyone beginning to understand this, many questions will arise which will be touched upon in the course of these lectures. First of all we must deal with the question: What difference is there between an illness due to external causes and an illness where the cause lies exclusively in the human organism itself. We are tempted to dispose of the latter illnesses by saying that they come of their own accord without any external provocation. But this is not so. In a certain sense we are justified in saying that illnesses come to us if we have a special disposition for the

illness within us. A great many forms of illness, however, we shall be able to trace to external causes; not indeed everything that happens to us, but much that befalls us from outside. If we break a leg for instance, we are obliged to account for it by external causes. We must also include within external causes the effects of the weather, and numerous cases of disease which come to people living in slum dwellings. Here again we envisage a wide field. An experienced person looking on the world will find it easy to explain why the modern trend of the medical faculty is to seek the causes of illness in external influences, and especially in microbes. Of these a witty gentleman (Tröhls-Lund) said not without justice: ‘Today it is said that illnesses are provoked by microbes, just as it was formerly said that they came from God, the devil, and so forth.’ In the thirteenth century it was said that illnesses came from God; in the fifteenth it was said that they came from the devil; later it was said that illnesses came from the humours, today we say that illnesses come from microbes! Such are the views that in the course of time give place to one another.

Thus we speak of external causes of human illness and health. And the man of the present day may easily be tempted to use a word that is fundamentally adapted to bring disorder into the whole of our world-

conception. If someone who was previously healthy comes into a district where there is an epidemic of influenza or diphtheria, and then falls ill, the man of today will be inclined to say that the person has become ill because he entered this particular district. It is thus easy to make use of the word ‘chance.’ Today people really speak of ‘chance.’ This word is really disastrous for any world-conception, and as long as we make no attempt to become clear about what is so readily termed ‘chance,’ we shall not be able to deal in any way satisfactorily with the initial stages of the subject: ‘Natural and accidental illnesses of man.’ For this it is essential that we should attempt by way of introduction to throw some light on the word ‘chance.’

Is not chance itself inclined to make us suspicious of the way it is frequently defined to-day? I have already on a previous occasion drawn your attention to the fact that a clever man in the eighteenth century was not entirely wrong when, concerning the reason for the erection of monuments, he made the following statement: ‘If we regard objectively the course of history, we should have to erect by far the greater number of monuments to Chance.’ And if we examine history, we shall make strange discoveries concerning what is concealed behind chance. As I have mentioned before, we owe the telescope to the fact that children

once were playing with optical lenses in an optical laboratory. In their play they formed a combination by means of which someone then produced a telescope.

You might also recall the famous lamp in the cathedral of Pisa, which before the time of Galileo was seen by thousands and thousands, oscillating with the same regularity. But it remained for Galileo to find out by experiment how these oscillations coincided with the course of his blood circulation, whereby he discovered the famous laws of the pendulum. Had we not known these, the whole course of our physics, the whole of our culture would have developed on entirely different lines. Let us try to find a meaning in human evolution, and then see whether we should still wish to maintain that only chance was at work when Galileo made this important discovery. Let us consider yet another case.

We are aware what Luther’s translation of the Bible means to the civilised countries of Europe. It profoundly influenced religious sentiment and thought and also the development of what we call the German literary language. I simply mention the fact without comment. I insist only on the profound influence which this translation exercised. We must endeavour to see the significance of that education which, during

the course of several centuries, came to mankind as a result of Luther's translation of the Bible. Let us endeavour to perceive a meaning in this, and then let us consider the following fact.

Up to a certain period of his life Luther was deeply imbued with the feeling and desire so to order his life as to become a veritable 'child of God.' This desire had been brought about by a constant reading of the Bible. The custom prevailed amongst the Augustinian monks of reading preferably the works of the Fathers of the Church, but Luther passed to the spiritual enjoyment of the Bible itself. Thus he was led to this intense feeling of being a 'child of God,' and under this influence he fulfilled his duties as teacher of Theology in the first Wittenberg period. The fact that I should now like to emphasise is that Luther had a certain repugnance to acquiring the title of Doctor of Theology, but that, when sitting with an old friend of the Erfurt Augustinian monastery, he was persuaded in the course of a 'chance' conversation to try and gain the hat of a Doctor of Theology. For this purpose it was necessary once more to study the Bible. Thus it was the 'chance' conversation with his friend which led to a renewed study of the Bible, and to all that resulted from it.

Try to conceive from the point of view of the last centuries the significance of the ‘chance’ that Luther once conversed with that friend and was persuaded to try for the Doctorate of Theology. You will be obliged to see that it would be grotesque to connect this human evolution with a ‘chance’ event.

From what has been said we shall first of all conclude that perhaps after all there is something more in chance than is usually supposed. As a rule we believe chance to be something which cannot be satisfactorily explained either by the laws of nature, or by the laws of life, and that it constitutes a kind of surplus over and above what can be explained. Let us now add to this statement a fact which has helped us to understand so many aspects of life: Man, since he began his earth existence, has been subject to the two forces of the luciferic and ahrimanic principles. These forces and principles continually penetrate into man. While the luciferic forces act more within by influencing the astral body, the ahrimanic forces act rather through the external impressions which he receives. In what we receive from the external world there are contained the ahrimanic forces, and in what arises and acts within the soul in the shape of joy and dejection, desires, and so forth, there are contained the luciferic forces. The luciferic as well as the

ahrimanic principles induce us to give way to error. The luciferic principle induces us to deceive ourselves as to our own inner life, to judge our inner life wrongly, to see Maya, illusion within ourselves. If we contemplate life rationally, we shall not find it difficult to discover Maya in our own soul life. Let us consider how very often we persuade ourselves that we have done one thing or another for this or that reason. Generally the reason is quite a different one, and far more profound. It may be found in temper, desire, or passion, but in our superficial consciousness we give quite a different explanation. Especially do we endeavour to deny the presence within our soul of that which the world does not greatly appreciate, and when we are driven to some act from purely egotistical motives, we frequently find ourselves clothing these crude egotistical impulses with a cloak of unselfishness, and explaining why it was necessary for us thus to act. As a rule we are not aware ourselves that we err. When we become aware of it, there generally begins an improvement accompanied by a certain feeling of shame. The worst of it is that for the most we are ignorant that we are driven to something from the depths of our soul, and then we invent a motive for the deed in question. This has also been discovered by modern psychologists. As there exists but little psychological culture today, however, these

grotesque indications are brought forward, and interpretations are arrived at which are altogether peculiar. Any true investigator on observing such facts will naturally fathom their true significance and so realise that there are indeed two influences acting together, namely, our consciousness, and that which dwells in the deeper layers beneath the threshold of consciousness. But when the same facts are observed by a materialistic psychologist, he will set to work differently. He will immediately fabricate a theory about the difference between the pretext for our deeds and the real motive. If, for instance, a psychologist discusses the suicides of students which occur so frequently today, he will say that what is quoted as pretext is not the real motive; that the real motive lies far deeper, being found mostly in a misdirected sexual life, and that the real motive is so transformed that it deludes the consciousness for some reason or other.

Often this may be so, but anyone who has the least knowledge of truly profound psychological thought will never from this evolve a general theory. Such a theory could easily be refuted, for if the case really is such that pretext is nothing, and motive everything, this would also apply to the psychologist himself, and we should be forced to say that with him too, what he

is telling us and developing as a theory is but a pretext. If we were to search for deeper reasons, perhaps the reasons alleged by him would be found to be of exactly the same nature. If this psychologist had, truly learnt why a reason is impossible that has been based upon the conclusion: ‘All Cretans are liars,’ and that such a judgement is biased if made by the Cretan himself, if he had learnt the reason why this is so, he would also have learnt what an extraordinarily vicious circle is created when in certain domains assertions can be driven back upon oneself. In almost the whole compass of our literature we find very little of truly deep culture. That is why as a rule people hardly notice what they themselves do, and for this reason it will be indispensable for Spiritual Science in every respect to avoid such confusions in logic. Modern philosophers when dealing with Spiritual Science come more than any others to such confusions in logic. Our example is typical of this. We here see the tricks played upon us by the luciferic influences transforming the soul-life into Maya, so that we can pretend to have quite different motives from those really dwelling within us.

We should try to acquire a stricter self-discipline in this respect. Today words are as a rule handled with great facility. A word, however, can lead to great error

and confusion. The word has but to have a pleasing sound, and it creates the impression of a charitable deed. Even the pleasant sound of a sentence will betray us into believing that the motive in question is within our soul, while in truth the egotistical principle may be concealed behind it without our being aware of its presence, because we have not the will to arrive at true self-knowledge. Thus we see Lucifer active on the one side. How does Ahriman act on the other?

Ahriman is that principle which intermingles with our perceptions and enters us from outside. Ahriman's activity is strongest when we feel that in this case thought is not sufficient, and that we face a critical moment in our thought life. Thinking is trapped as in a thought maze. Then the ahrimanic principle seizes the occasion to penetrate us as through a rift in the external world. If we pursue the course of world events and the more obvious occurrences, if for instance, we pursue modern physics back to the moment when Galileo was sitting in front of the oscillating church lamp in the Cathedral of Pisa, we can spin a thought-net embracing all these events whereby the matter will be easily explained. Everything will be quite clear, but the moment we arrive at the oscillating church lamp, our thoughts become confused. Here is the window through which the ahrimanic forces penetrate

us with the greatest strength, and here our thought refuses to understand the phenomena which might bring reason and understanding into the matter. Here also is what we call ‘chance.’ It is here where Ahriman becomes most dangerous to us. Those phenomena which we call ‘chance’ are the phenomena by which we are most easily deluded by Ahriman.

Thus we shall learn to understand that it is not the nature of facts themselves that induces us to speak of ‘chance,’ but that it depends on ourselves and our own development. Little by little we shall have to educate ourselves to penetrate Maya and illusion, that is to say, we must gain insight into matters where Ahriman’s influence is at its strongest. So that just where we have to speak of important causes of illness, and of a light that is to be shed over the course of many an illness, we shall find it necessary to approach phenomena from the following aspect. First of all we shall have to try and understand how far it is by chance that someone should be travelling on the very train on which he may lose his life, or that someone at a definite period should be exposed to disease-germs affecting him from outside, or to some other cause of illness, and if we pursue matters with sharpened understanding, we shall be able to arrive at a truer

cognition of the whole meaning for human life of illness and health.

Today we had to show in detail how Lucifer leads to illusions within man, and how Ahriman becomes intertwined with external perceptions and there leads to Maya; that it is a result of Lucifer if we delude ourselves with a false motive, and how the false supposition concerning the world of phenomena — the deception through Ahriman — leads to the belief in chance. These foundations had to be laid to show that karmic events, the results of earlier lives, are active also in those cases where external causes, which seem to be chance, give rise to illnesses.

6. The Relationships Between Karma and Accidents

IT is easily understood that karmic law can operate when, in the sense demonstrated, a cause of illness asserts itself from within man. But it is more difficult to understand that the experiences and actions of a previous life brought in by the individual at birth can provoke such illnesses as are the result of exterior causes — such illnesses as science calls infections. Nevertheless, if we go deeper into the true nature of karma, we shall learn not merely to understand how these external causes can be related to the experiences and deeds of earlier lives, but we shall also learn that accidents which befall us, events which we are prone to describe as chance, may stand in a definite relationship with the course of a previous life. We must indeed penetrate somewhat deeper into the whole nature of man’s being if we wish to understand the conditions that are so veiled by our human outlook.

We saw yesterday how chance or accident always presents the external event in a veiled form, because in those instances where we speak of chance, the external deceptions created by the ahrimanic powers

are the greatest possible. Now let us examine in detail how such accidents, that is to say those events that are generally called ‘accidents,’ come about.

Here it is necessary to bear in mind the law, the truth — the recognition that in life much of what we describe as ‘arising from within,’ or as ‘derived from the inner being of man’ is already clothed in illusion, because if we truly rise above illusion, we find that much of what we at first believe to have originated within man must be described as streaming in from outside. We always encounter this when we have to deal with those dispositions, those traits of character, which are summed up under the name of ‘hereditary characteristics.’ It seems as though these hereditary characteristics are a part of us only because our forbears had them, and it may appear to us in the most eminent degree as though they had fallen to our lot through no fault of our own, and without our co-operation. It is easy to arrive at a mistaken distinction between what we have brought from earlier incarnations and what we have inherited from our parents and forbears. When we reincarnate we do not come haphazard to such and such parents or to such and such a country. There is operating here a motive allied to our innermost being. Even in those hereditary characteristics which have nothing to do with illness,

we must not assume anything haphazard. In the case of a family such as Bach’s for instance, there were for many generations again and again more or less renowned musicians born (there were more than twenty more or less renowned musicians in Bach’s family). We might well believe that this has purely to do with the line of heredity, that the characteristics are inherited from the forbears, and that as such characteristics are there, certain tendencies towards musical talent brought over from a previous incarnation will be unfolded. This is not so however; the facts are quite different.

Suppose that someone has the opportunity of receiving many musical impressions in a life between birth and death, that these musical impressions pass by him in this life, simply for the reason that he has not a musical ear. Other impressions which he receives in this life do not pass by him in the same way, because he has organs so formed that he can transform the experiences and impressions into capacities of his own. Here we can say that a person has impressions in the course of his life which are capable of being transformed into capacities and talents through the disposition which he has brought with him from his last birth; and he has other impressions, which on account of his general karma,

because he has not received the suitable powers, he cannot transform into the corresponding capacities. They remain, they are stored up, and in the period between death and a new birth they are converted into the particular tendency to be expressed in the next incarnation. And this tendency leads the person to seek for reincarnation in a particular family which can provide him with the suitable organs. Thus if someone has received a great many musical impressions, and because of an unmusical ear, he was unable to transform them into musical capacities or enjoyment, this incapacity will be connected with the tendency in his soul to come into a family where he will inherit a musical ear. From this we shall now see that if a certain family inherits a certain construction of the ear — which can be inherited just as well as the external form of the nose — all those individuals who in consequence of their former incarnation long for a musical ear, will strive to come into this family. From this we see that, in fact, a person has not inherited a musical ear or a similar gift in a particular incarnation. ‘by chance,’ but that he has looked for and actually sought for the inherited characteristic.

If we observe such a person from the moment of his birth, it will seem to us as though the musical sense were within him, a quality of his inner being. If,

however, we extend our investigation to the time before his birth, we shall find that the musical ear for which he had to seek is something that has come to him from outside.

Before his birth or conception the musical ear was not within him. There was only an impulse urging him to acquire such an ear. In this case man has drawn to himself something external. Before reincarnation the feature which is later termed hereditary was something external. It approached man, and he hastened to take it. At the moment of incarnation it became internal, and made its appearance within. Thus, in speaking of hereditary disposition, we suffer from a delusion, because we do not take into account the time when the inner quality was an external one.

Let us now enquire whether an external event occurring between birth and death, might not be the same as the case we have just now been discussing — whether it might be capable of being transformed into something internal. We cannot reply to this question without examining still more closely the nature of sickness and health. (We have given many instances in order to characterise sickness and health. And you know that I do not define, but try little by little to describe things, and to add ever more characteristics,

so that they may gradually become comprehensible. So let us now add some more characteristics to those we have already collected.)

We must compare sickness and health with something that appears in normal life, namely, sleeping and waking, and we shall then find something of still greater significance. What is taking place within a human being when the daily states of sleeping and waking succeed one another? We know that when we sleep, the physical and the etheric body are abandoned by the astral body and the Ego, and that the awakening is a return of the astral body and Ego to the physical and etheric body. Every morning on waking, all that constitutes our inner being — astral body and Ego — dives down again into our physical and etheric bodies. What happens with regard to those experiences which a human being has when going to sleep and when awakening?

If we consider the moment of going to sleep, we see that all experiences which from morning to night fluctuated in our lives, especially the psychic experiences of joy and sorrow, happiness and pain, passions, imaginations, and so forth, sink down into the subconscious. In normal life, when asleep, we ourselves are unconscious. Why do we lose

consciousness when we fall asleep? We know that during the state of sleep we are surrounded by a spiritual world, just as in the waking state we are surrounded by things and facts of the physical world of the senses. Why do we not perceive this spiritual world? Because in normal life to see the spiritual facts and spiritual things surrounding us at the present stage of human development between going to sleep and awakening, would prove dangerous in the highest degree. If the person were today to pass over consciously into the world which surrounds us between going to sleep and awakening, his astral body which gained its full development in the Ancient Moon period, would flow out into the spiritual world, but this could not be done by the Ego, which can be developed only during the Earth period, and which will have completed its Evolution at the end of the Earth period. The Ego is not sufficiently developed to be able to unfold the whole of its activity between falling asleep and awakening. If we were to fall asleep consciously, the condition of our Ego could be illustrated as follows. Let us suppose that we have a small drop of coloured liquid; we drop this into a basin of water and allow it to mix. The colour of that small drop will no more be seen because it has mixed with the whole mass of the water. Something of this nature happens when man in falling asleep leaves his

physical and etheric bodies. The latter principles are those which hold together the whole of the human being. As soon as the astral body and Ego leave the two lower principles, they disperse in all directions, impelled always by this principle of expansion. Thus it would happen that the Ego would be dissolved, and we should indeed be able to envisage the pictures of the spiritual world, but should not be able to understand them by means of those forces which only the Ego can bring to bear — the forces of discernment, insight, and so forth — in short, with the consciousness we apply to ordinary life. For the Ego would be dissolved and we should be frenzied, torn hither and thither, swimming without individuality and without direction in the sea of astral events and impressions. For this reason, because in the case of the normal person the Ego is not sufficiently strong, it reacts upon the astral body and prevents it from entering consciously the spiritual world which is its true home, until there comes a time when the Ego will be able to accompany the astral body wherever it may penetrate. Thus there is a good reason for our losing consciousness when we fall asleep, for if it were otherwise, we should not be able to maintain our Ego. We shall be able sufficiently to maintain it only when our Earth evolution is achieved. That is why we are

prevented from unfolding the consciousness of our astral body.

The very reverse takes place when we awaken. When we awaken and sink down into our physical and etheric bodies, we ought in reality to experience their inner nature. But this does not happen, for at the moment of waking we are prevented from regarding the inner nature of our corporeal being, because our attention is immediately directed to external events. Neither our faculty of sight nor our faculty of perception is directed towards penetration of the inner being, but is distracted by the external world. If we were immediately to apply ourselves to our inner being, there would be an exact reversal of the situation that would occur if we fell asleep and entered the spiritual world with our ordinary consciousness. Everything spiritual that we had acquired through our Ego in the course of our Earth life would then concentrate, and after our re-entry into the physical and etheric bodies, it would act upon them most powerfully, bringing about a tremendous increase of our egotism. We should sink down with our Ego; and all the passions, the desires, the greed, and the egotism of which we are capable would be concentrated within this Ego. All this egotism would pour away into the life of the senses. So that this may

not happen we are distracted by the external world, and are not permitted to penetrate our inner being with our consciousness.

That this is so can be confirmed from the reports of those mystics who attempted really to penetrate the inner being of man. Let us consider Meister Eckhart, Johannes Tauler, and other mystics of the Middle Ages, who in order to descend into their own inner being dedicated themselves to a state in which their attention and interest was entirely turned away from the external world. Let us read the biographies of many Saints and Mystics who tried to descend into their inner selves. What was their experience? Temptations, tribulations, and similar experiences which they have depicted in vivid colours. These were compressed in the astral body and Ego, and made themselves felt as opposing forces. That is why all those who as Mystics have attempted to descend into the inner self found that the further they descended, the more were they impelled to an extinguishing of their Ego. Meister Eckhart found an excellent word to describe this descending into his own inner self. He speaks of ‘Ent Werdung,’ that is to say the extinction of the Ego. And we read in “;The Theologia Germanica”; (German Theology) how the author describes the mystic path into the inner human being,

and how he insists that he who wishes to descend will act no longer through his own Ego, but that Christ with Whom he is fully permeated, will act within him. Such Mystics sought to extinguish their Ego. Not they themselves, but Christ within them should think, feel, and will, so that there may not emerge what dwells within them in the form of passion, desire and greed, but rather that which streams into them as Christ. That is why St. Paul says ‘Not I, but Christ in me.’

We can describe the processes of awakening and falling asleep as inner experiences of the human being: awakening as a sinking down of the compressed Ego into the corporeality of man, and falling asleep as a liberation from consciousness, because we are not yet ready to see that world into which we penetrate on falling asleep. Through this we understand waking and sleeping in the same sense in which we understand many other things in this world, as a permeation by one another of the various members of the human entity. If we consider a waking person from this point of view, we shall say that in him are present the four members of the human entity, the physical body, etheric body, astral body, and the Ego, and that they are linked together in a certain way. What results from this? The fact of ‘being awake.’ For we could not be awake were we not so to descend into

our corporeality that our attention is distracted by the external world. Whether we are awake or not depends upon a certain regulated co-operation of our four members. And again, whether we are asleep or not depends upon the proper separation of our four members. It is not enough to say that we consist of physical body, etheric body, astral body, and Ego, for we understand man only when we know to what extent the various members are linked together in a certain state, and how intimately they are connected. This is necessary to an understanding of human nature. Now let us examine how these four members of man are linked together in the case of a normal person. Let us set out from the standpoint that the condition of man when awake is the normal condition.

Most of us will remember that the consciousness we at present possess as earth-men between birth and death, is only one of the possible forms of consciousness. If, for instance, we study ‘Occult Science,’ we shall see that our present consciousness is a stage among seven different stages of consciousness, and that this consciousness which we possess today developed out of three other preceding stages of consciousness, and that it will at a later period develop into three other succeeding forms of consciousness. When we were Moon beings we had

not yet an Ego. The Ego became united with man only during the Earth period. That is why we could not gain our present consciousness before the Earth period. Such a consciousness as we have today between birth and death, presumes that the Ego co-operates with the other three members exactly as it is doing today and is the most exalted of the four members of the human entity. Before we were impregnated with the Ego we comprised only physical body, etheric body, and astral body. The astral body was then our most exalted member, and our consciousness then was such as can to-day be compared only with our dream consciousness which is a survival of the past. But we must not think of the present dream consciousness, but one in which the dream images represent realities. If we study the dream as it is to-day, we shall find in its manifold images much that is chaotic, because our present dream consciousness is an ancient inheritance. But if we study the consciousness that preceded that of today, we should find that we could not at that time see external objects such as plants, for instance. Thus it was impossible for us to receive an external impression. Anything that approached us evoked an impression analogous to that of a dream, but corresponded to a certain external object or impression.

Thus before dealing with the Ego-consciousness, we shall have to deal with a consciousness which might be termed an astral consciousness, because it is attached to the astral body which was formerly the most exalted member. It is dim and nebulous, and not yet irradiated by the light of the Ego. When man became earth-man, this consciousness was outshone by the Ego-consciousness. The astral body, however, is still within us, and we might ask how it was that our astral consciousness could be so dimmed and eliminated that the Ego-consciousness could fully take its place? This became possible because through man's impregnation by the Ego, the earlier connection between the astral body and the etheric body was greatly loosened. The earlier and more intimate connection was, so to speak, dissolved. Thus before the Ego-consciousness, there existed a far more intimate relationship between man's astral body and the lower members of his being. The astral body penetrated further into the other members than it does today. In a certain respect the astral body has been wrested from the etheric and physical bodies.

We must make ourselves quite clear about this process of the partial exit, this detachment of the astral body from the etheric and physical bodies. Even today, might there not be a possibility with our

ordinary state of consciousness to establish something similar to this ancient relationship? Could it not happen also today in a human life, that the astral body should try to penetrate further into the other members than it ought, to impregnate and penetrate more than is its due? A certain normal standard is necessary for the penetration of the astral body into the etheric and physical bodies. Let us suppose that this standard is exceeded in one direction or another. Certain disturbances in the whole of the human organism will result from this. For what man is to-day depends upon that exact relationship between the various principles of his being which we find in a normal waking state. As soon as the astral body acts wrongly, as soon as it penetrates deeper into the etheric and physical bodies, there will be disorder. In our past discussions we saw that this really takes place. We then looked at the whole process from another aspect. When does this happen? It happens when man in an earlier life impregnated his astral body with something, allowed something to flow into it that we conceive as a moral or intellectual transgression for that earlier life. This has been engraved on the astral body. Now, when man enters life anew, this may in fact cause the astral body to seek a different relationship with the physical and etheric bodies than it would have sought had it not in

the preceding life been impregnated with this transgression. Thus are the transgressions committed under the influence of Ahriman and Lucifer transformed into organising forces which, in a new life induce the astral body to adopt a different relationship towards the physical and etheric bodies than would be the case had such forces not intervened.

So we see how earlier thoughts, sensations, and feelings affect the astral body and induce it to bring about disorders in the human organism. What happens when such disorders are brought about? When the astral body penetrates further into the physical and etheric bodies than it normally should, it brings about something similar to what takes place when we awaken, when our Ego sinks down into the two lower principles. Awakening consists in the sinking down of the Ego-man into the physical and etheric bodies. In what then consists the action of the astral body when, induced by the effects of earlier experiences, it penetrates the physical and etheric bodies further than it should? That which takes place when our Ego and our astral body sink down into our physical and etheric bodies on awaking and perceive something, shows the very fact of our awakening. Just as the state of waking is the result of the descent of the Ego-man into our physical and etheric bodies,

there must now take place something analogous to what is done by the Ego — something done by the astral body. It descends into the etheric body and the physical body. If we see a man whose astral body has a tendency towards a closer union with the etheric and the physical bodies than should normally take place, we shall see the astral body accomplish the phenomenon which we otherwise achieve by the Ego upon awakening. What is this excessive penetration of the physical and etheric bodies by the astral body? It consists in that which may otherwise be described as the essence of disease. When our astral body does what we otherwise do upon awakening, namely pushes its way into the physical body and the etheric body, when the astral body which normally should not develop any consciousness within us, strives after a consciousness within our physical and etheric bodies, trying to awaken within us, we become ill. Illness is an abnormal waking condition of our astral body. What is it we do when in normal health we live in an ordinary waking condition? We are awake in ordinary life. But so that we could possess an ordinary waking condition, we had at an earlier stage to bring our astral body into a different relationship. We had to put it to sleep. It is essential that our astral body should sleep during the day whilst we are dominated by our Ego-consciousness. We can be healthy only if our

astral body is asleep within us. Now we can conceive of the essence of health and illness in the following way. Illness is an abnormal awakening within man of the astral body, and health is the normal sleeping state of the astral body.

And what is this consciousness of the astral body? If illness really is the awakening of the astral body, something like a consciousness must be manifested. There is an abnormal awakening, and so we can expect an abnormal consciousness. A consciousness of some kind there must be. When we fall ill something must happen similar to what occurs when we awake in the morning. Our faculties must be diverted to something different. Our ordinary consciousness awakens in the morning. Does any consciousness arise when we become ill?

Yes, there arises a consciousness that we know all too well. And which is this consciousness? A consciousness expresses itself in experiences! The consciousness which then arises is expressed in what we call pain, which we do not have during our waking condition when in ordinary health, because it is then that our astral body is asleep. ‘The sleeping’ of the astral body means that we are in regular normal relationship to the physical and etheric bodies, and

are without pain. Pain tells us that the astral body is pressing into the physical body and the etheric body in such a way in an abnormal state, and is acquiring consciousness. Such is pain.

We must not apply this statement without limits. When we speak in terms of Spiritual Science we must put limits to our statements. It has been stated that when our astral body awakens, there arises a consciousness that is steeped in pain. We must not conclude from this that pain and illness invariably go together. Without exception, every penetration into the etheric and physical bodies by the astral body constitutes illness, but the inverse does not hold. That illness may have a different character will be shown by the fact that not every illness is accompanied by pain. Most people take no notice of this because they usually do not strive after health, but are satisfied to be without pain; and when they are without pain they believe themselves to be healthy. This is not always the case; but generally in the absence of pain, people will believe themselves to be healthy. We should be under a great delusion if we believed that the experience of pain goes always together with illness. Our liver may be damaged through and through, and if the damage is not such that the abdominal wall is affected, there will be no pain at all. We may carry a

process of disease within us which in no way manifests itself through pain. This may be so in many instances. Objectively regarded these illnesses are the more serious, for if we experience pain we set to work to rid ourselves of it, but when we have no pain we do not greatly trouble to get rid of the disease.

What is the position in those cases where there is no pain with illness? We need but remember that only little by little did we develop into human beings such as we are today, and that it was during our earth period that we added the Ego to the astral body, etheric body, and physical body. Once, however, we were men who possessed only etheric body and physical body. A being possessing only these two principles is like a plant of the present day. We meet here a third degree of consciousness infinitely more vague, which does not attain to the clarity even of today’s dream consciousness. It is quite a mistake to believe that we are devoid of consciousness when we sleep. We have a consciousness, but it is so vague that we cannot call it up within our Ego to the point of memory. Such a consciousness dwells also within plants; it is a kind of sleep consciousness of still lower degree than the astral consciousness. We have now reached a still lower consciousness of man.

Let us suppose that through experiences in a previous incarnation we have brought about not only that disorder which comes into our organism when the astral body goes beyond its bounds, but also disorder caused by the etheric body pushing its way wrongly into the physical body. There certainly may arise such a condition where the relationship between the etheric body and the physical body is abnormal for present day man, where the etheric body has penetrated too far into the physical body. Let suppose that the astral body takes no part in this; but that the tendency created in an earlier life effects a closer connection that there should be between the etheric body and the physical body in the human organism. We have here the etheric body behaving in the same way as the astral body when we have pain.

If the etheric body in its turn sinks too deeply down into the physical body, there will appear a consciousness similar to that which we have during sleep, like the plant consciousness. It is not surprising therefore that this is a condition of which we are not aware. Anyone unaware of sleep will be equally unaware of this condition. And yet it is a form of awakening! As our astral body will awake abnormally when it has sunk too deeply into the etheric and physical bodies, so will our etheric body awake in an

abnormal manner when it penetrates too deeply into the physical body. But this will not be perceived by us, because it is an awakening to a consciousness even more vague than the consciousness of pain. Let us suppose that a person has really in an earlier life done something that between death and re-birth is so transformed that the etheric body itself awakens, that is, it takes intense possession of the physical body. If that happens there awakes within us a deep consciousness that cannot however be perceived in the same manner as other experiences of the human soul. Must it, however, be ineffectual because imperceptible? Let us try to explain the peculiar tendency acquired by a consciousness which lies still one degree deeper.

If you burn yourself — which is an external experience — this causes pain. If a pain is to appear, the consciousness must have at least the degree of consciousness of the astral body. A pain must be in the astral body; thus, whenever pain arises in the human soul, we are dealing with an occurrence in the astral body. Now let us suppose something happens which is not connected with pain, but is, however, an external stimulus, an external impression. If something flies into your eye, this causes an external stimulus and the eye closes. Pain is not connected with it. What does

the irritant produce? A movement. This is something similar to what occurs when the sole of your foot is touched; it is not pain, but still the foot twitches. Thus there are also impressions upon a human being which are not accompanied by pain, but which still give rise to some sort of an event, namely, a movement. In this case, because he cannot penetrate down into this deep degree of consciousness, the person does not know how it comes about that a movement follows the external stimulus. When you perceive pain and you thereby repulse something, it is the pain which makes you notice that which you then reject. But now something may come which urges you to an inner movement, to a reflex movement. In this case the consciousness does not descend to the degree at which the irritant is transformed into movement. Here you have a degree of consciousness which does not come into your astral experience, which is not experienced consciously, which runs its course in a kind of sleep consciousness, but is not, however, such, that it does not lead to occurrences. When this deeper penetration of the etheric body into the physical body comes about, it produces a consciousness which is not a pain consciousness, because the astral body takes no part in it, but is so vague that the person does not perceive it. This does not necessarily mean that a person in this consciousness cannot perform actions.

He also performs other actions in which his consciousness takes no part. You need only remember the case in which the ordinary day-consciousness is extinguished and a person while walking in his sleep commits all kinds of acts. In this case there is a kind of consciousness which the person cannot share in, because he can only experience the two higher forms of consciousness: the astral consciousness as pleasure and pain, etc., and the Ego-consciousness as judgement and as the ordinary day-consciousness. This does not imply that a man cannot act under the impulse of this sleep consciousness.

Now we have the consciousness which is so deep that a man cannot attain to it when the etheric body descends into the physical body. Let us suppose that he wishes to do something concerning which in normal life he can know nothing, which is connected in some way with his circumstances; he will do this without knowing anything about it. Something in him, namely, the thing itself, will do this without his knowing anything about it. Let us now take the case of a person who through certain occurrences in a former life has laid down causes for himself, which in the period between death and re-birth work down to where they lead to a penetration of the etheric body into the physical body. Actions will proceed from this

which lead to the working out of more deeply-lying processes of disease. In this case the person will be forced by such activities to search out the external causes for these diseases.

It may seem strange that this is not clear to the ordinary Ego-consciousness — but a person would never do it from this consciousness. He would never in his ordinary Ego-consciousness expose himself to a host of bacilli. But let us suppose that this dim consciousness finds that an external injury is necessary, so that the process which we have described as the whole purpose of illness may come about. This consciousness which penetrates into the physical body then seeks for the cause of the disease or of the illness. It is the real being of man which goes in quest of the cause for illness in order to bring about what we called yesterday the process of illness. Thus from the deeper nature of disease and illness we shall understand that even if no pain appears, inner reactions may always come, but if pain is manifested — as long as the etheric body penetrates too far into the physical body — there may always come that which one may call: the search for the external causes of illness through the deeper-lying strata of human consciousness itself. Grotesque as it may sound, it is nevertheless true, that we search with a different

degree of consciousness for the external causes of our diseases — just as we do for our inherited characteristics — when we need them. But, again, what we have just said only holds good within the limits we have described to-day.

In this lecture it has been our special task to show that a person may be in the position — without following it with the degree of consciousness of which he is aware — to look for an illness, and this is brought about by an abnormal, deeper condition of consciousness. We had to show that in an illness we are concerned with an awakening of stages of consciousness which as human beings we have long transcended. Through committing errors in a previous life, we have evoked deeper degrees of consciousness than are appropriate to our present life; and what we do from the impulses of this deeper consciousness influences the course of the disease, as well as the process which actually leads to it. Thus we see that in these abnormal conditions ancient stages of consciousness appear which man has long since passed. If you consider the facts of every-day life but a little, you will be able to understand in a general way what has been said today. It is indeed the case, that through his pain, man descends more deeply into his being, and this is expressed in the well-known

statement that a person only knows that he possesses an organ when it begins to give him pain. That is a popular saying, but it is not so very stupid. Why does a person in his normal consciousness know nothing about it? Because in normal cases his consciousness sleeps so deeply that it does not dip intensely enough into his astral body; but if it does, then pain appears, and through the pain he knows that he has the organ in question. In many of the popular sayings there is something which is quite true, because they are heirlooms of earlier stages of consciousness in which man, when he was able to see into the spiritual world, was aware of much that we now have to acquire with effort. If you understand that a person may experience deeper layers of consciousness, you will also understand that not only external causes of illness may be sought by man, but also external strokes of fate which he cannot explain rationally, but the rationality of which works from the deeper strata of consciousness. Thus it is reasonable to suppose that a man would not out of his ordinary consciousness place himself where he may be struck by lightning; with his ordinary consciousness he would do anything to avoid standing where the lightning may strike him. But there may be a consciousness active within him, which lies much deeper than the ordinary consciousness, and which from a foresight which is not possessed by

the ordinary consciousness leads him to the very place where the lightning may strike him — and wills that he should be so struck. The man really seeks out the accident.

We have understood that it is possible to attribute karmic influences to accidents and other exterior causes of illness. How this is brought about in detail, how those forces which are in the deeper layers of consciousness act on human beings, and whether it is permissible for our ordinary consciousness to avoid such accidents, are questions we shall be dealing with later. In the same way as we can understand that if we go to a place where we may be exposed to an infection, we have done so under the influence of a degree of consciousness that has driven us there, so also must we be able to understand how it is that we take precautions to render such infections less effective, and that through our ordinary consciousness we are in a position to counteract these effects by hygienic measures. We must admit that it would be most unreasonable if it were possible for the sub consciousness to seek disease germs if they could not on the other hand be counteracted through the ordinary consciousness.

We shall see that it is both reasonable to seek out causes of illness, and reasonable too, out of the ordinary consciousness to take hygienic measures against infection, thus hindering the causes of illness.

7. Forces of Nature, Volcanic Eruptions, Earthquakes and Epidemics in Relation to Karma

YOU will have noticed in these lectures that we are approaching our goal step by step, but that with each step we are trying to penetrate more deeply into our subject. In the last lecture we spoke of the nature of pain, which may be connected with an illness; we also pointed out how in other cases an illness may run its course — at least in a certain sense — without being accompanied by pain.

We must now consider the nature of pain in somewhat more detail. We must keep before us the fact that pain may become apparent side by side with illness. At our last discussion we already concluded that we may not look upon disease and pain as inseparable. We must be aware that if pain is connected with an illness, there must be something more at stake than mere illness. We have pointed out that the process taking place during the transition from one incarnation to another, whereby events of earlier incarnations are transformed into causes of illness, is influenced on the one side by the luciferic principle, and on the other by the ahrimanic principle.

How do we lay the foundation of illnesses? Why do we acquire a predisposition for illness? What induces us between death and rebirth to prepare forces which will manifest as illness in our next life? We are impelled to this when we see our own weakness in the face of the temptations of Lucifer on the one hand and those of Ahriman on the other. All our greed, egotism, ambition, pride, vanity, all qualities connected with this inflation of our Ego, this desire to be in the limelight, all this is the result of luciferic temptations. In other words, if we fall victims to the forces active within our astral body so that they find expression in our egotistical greeds and passions, we are in that incarnation performing actions to which we are tempted by Lucifer. And during the period between death and rebirth, we see the results of such deeds inspired by Lucifer. We then contract the tendency to incarnate ourselves in conditions where we shall have to suffer an illness which, if it is overcome, will free us still further from the clutches of these luciferic powers. If the luciferic power did not exist, we should not fall into those temptations that lead us to seek for renewed powers.

If there were nothing else in life but the egotistical impulses and passions born of Lucifer, we should never be able to free ourselves from them, not even in

successive incarnations, for we should ever again succumb to them. Suppose for instance we had been left to our own devices during Earth Evolution, but still subject to the luciferic influence. We should have the temptations of the luciferic powers in one incarnation and then after death perceive where they had led us. This would bring about an illness, but if nothing else co-operated, the illness would lead to no great improvement during the life in which it is experienced. It leads to an improvement only because other powers, adversaries of Lucifer, add something to the whole process.

When we fall into the power of Lucifer, there immediately intervenes a counteraction by powers antagonistic to the luciferic powers. These exercise an opposing force, whereby the luciferic influence may be actually driven out of us. And it is these forces, opponents of the luciferic powers, which add pain to the process resulting from Lucifer’s influence. Thus, if the luciferic powers are evil, we must regard pain as something which is given us by benevolent forces, because through pain we escape from the clutches of these evil powers, and do not succumb to them again. If there were no pain connected with illnesses which result from yielding to the luciferic powers, we should feel that it was not so bad after all to succumb to

these powers. And there would be nothing impelling us to escape from the luciferic forces. Pain, which is the consciousness of the astral body in a wrong waking state, is also that which prevents us from ever again falling prey to the luciferic powers in that realm where we have already succumbed. Thus pain becomes our schoolmaster in regard to the temptations of the luciferic powers.

But how can pain become our schoolmaster, if we only feel the pain and are in no way aware of its beneficent force. If this is the case it is the result of our Ego-consciousness. In that consciousness that we have described as lying beneath our Ego-consciousness, and which is not perceived in the normal state, a process is already taking place whereby we realise that we are experiencing pain, and that this is brought about by the beneficial forces to counteract our transgressions. This is a force in our subconscious mind acting truly as karmic fulfilment — as an impulse to fall no more into those deeds, inclinations, and greeds that brought about the illness.

Thus we see how karma acts, how we fall a prey to the luciferic powers, how these powers effect an illness in the following incarnation, and how the beneficent

forces add pain to the organic trouble, so that through pain we may educate the subconscious. We may therefore say that in every case where pain makes itself felt, we are dealing with an illness provoked by the luciferic forces. Pain is a sign that the luciferic power lies at its roots. People who go in for classification will now be longing to distinguish these illnesses that are due to purely luciferic influence from those which can be traced to purely ahrimanic influence. For in all theorising it is most convenient to classify —to make formulae —and people delude themselves into believing that they have comprehended much in this way. In reality, however, things do not arrange themselves in such a way that they can be grasped in this convenient manner. In reality they continually intercross and interpenetrate. And it will be easy to understand that during the course of an illness there are phenomena which may be traced in part to Lucifer’s influence — to the activities of our astral body — and others which are traced to the ahrimanic influence. Thus no one must believe that if we feel pain, it is traceable only to luciferic influences. Pain reveals that part of our illness is traceable to luciferic influence. But this will become clearer if we ask whence the ahrimanic influence comes.

We should not have fallen a prey to ahrimanic influence if we had not first succumbed to that of Lucifer. Through the luciferic influence there came about the relation of the four elements constituting man — the physical body, etheric body, astral body and the Ego —a relation which would not have existed if only the forces opposed to Lucifer had operated. In that case we should have developed quite differently. Thus the luciferic principle caused disorder in the inner being of man, and the position of man in relation to the external world depends upon what he is himself. Just as we cannot see the world when we have imperfect eyes, so through luciferic influence we are prevented from seeing the external world as it really is. And because of man's incapacity to see the external world as it really is, the ahrimanic influence has been able to insinuate itself into this inaccurate picture. So it is the luciferic influence on man which has made Ahriman's approach possible. Subjected to the ahrimanic influence we can fall a prey not only to egotistical passions, urges, greeds, vanity and pride, and so forth, but now egotism can affect the human organism to such an extent as to develop organs through which we can see the external world distorted and inaccurate. Ahriman has insinuated himself into this inaccurate picture, and under his influence we succumb not only to inner temptations, but also to

error. We fall into untruth in our judgement of the external world and our assertions concerning it. Thus Ahriman acts from outside; but we have made it possible for him to reach us.

The ahrimanic and luciferic influences are thus never separated. They always react upon one another, and in a certain sense keep a balance. Lucifer manifests outwards from within, Ahriman acts from without, and our picture of the world is formed between the two. If in one incarnation the inner man gains in strength, if the man is more exposed to the inner influences, then he will succumb more easily to Lucifer, when his pride, his vanity, etc., will come into play. In an incarnation in which man is not through his general karma predisposed to yield to inner influences, he will be more inclined to fall a prey to error and the temptations of Ahriman. This is what actually happens. So that in daily life we at one moment fall a prey more to the temptations of Lucifer, and at another to those of Ahriman. And we oscillate between these two influences which lead us — the one to inner conceit, and the other to illusions about the external world.

Since it is a matter of singular importance, it might here be mentioned that the temptations from both

sides must be especially resisted by anyone who is called to a spiritual development, and who wishes to penetrate into the spiritual world, whether by penetrating into that external spirituality which lies behind the phenomena of the external world, or whether by descending mystically into his own inner being. When we penetrate the world which lies behind the physical world, we always find those deceptive images which Ahriman conjures up. When a man tries to descend mystically into his own soul, he is exposed to the temptations of Lucifer in a special degree. When he tries to descend without having previously taken precautions against pride, vanity, and so forth; when he succeeds in living as a Mystic without having given heed to a special moral culture, he is the more liable to fall victim to the temptations of Lucifer, who acts upon the soul from within. If a Mystic has not given careful heed to his moral culture, he will be in great danger when penetrating his inner being, of calling forth even more strongly than before the reactionary forces of Lucifer, and of becoming even more vain and proud than he was formerly. For this reason it is essential first to ensure that through the forming of our character we are able to resist the temptations of vanity, conceit, and pride to which we in any case shall be exposed. We can never do enough towards the acquisition of such qualities as lead to modesty

and humility. This is essential for that aspect of our development which we call ‘Mystic.’ On the other hand it is necessary to defend ourselves against the delusions of Ahriman when we attempt to reach the spiritual origin of things, by following the path which leads behind the phenomena of the external world. If we do not form a strong and steadfast character which enables us to fortify ourselves, to acquire a strong inner life, it may well happen that just at the moment when we are succeeding in going out into the spiritual world, we fall into the clutches of Ahriman, who will beguile us by illusion upon illusion, hallucination upon hallucination.

We must understand that these things must be accepted in the spirit and not in the letter. Because the fact is so often emphasised that a higher development desirous of comprehending phenomena of the external world must be accompanied by full consciousness, it happens that again and again somnambulists assure us that they perceive the spiritual world, and do so when fully conscious. The only thing that can be done is to assure them that it would be far better for them, and far wiser if they did not have this full consciousness. For people are mistaken as to the nature of this consciousness, which is merely an image or astral consciousness. If these

people were not conscious in a lower degree they would not perceive anything, and what matters is that we should on entering the spiritual world maintain the integrity of our Ego-consciousness. With the Ego-consciousness however is linked our power of judgement and our faculty for acute discrimination. This is what is lacking regarding the forms which they see in the spiritual world. That they should have some consciousness is in no way remarkable, but the consciousness they should have is that which is linked to the culture of our Ego. That is why during our development towards the perception of the higher worlds we are not so keen on reaching these higher worlds as speedily as possible, on seeing a world filled with images and all kinds of forms, of hearing perhaps all kinds of voices. Rather do we emphasise the fact that entrance to the spiritual world can only bring happiness or be of advantage when our consciousness, our faculty of discrimination and discernment, and our power of judgement have been so sharpened that in the higher worlds we shall be subject to no delusion. This can best be achieved through a study of Anthroposophical truths. For this reason we insist that the study of Anthroposophy is the best safeguard against these alleged visions, which by their nature are not capable of being brought to the test of a sound judgement. One schooled in

Spiritual Science will not accept everything that comes his way, but will be able to distinguish between reality and mirage. He will also know that any auditory perceptions must be treated with the greatest circumspection, for no such perceptions can correspond to reality unless the hearer has previously passed through the sphere of absolute silence. He who has not first experienced the absolute silence and calm of the spiritual world may be certain that what he perceives are delusions, even though what they convey to him seems most portentous. Only he who has taken the pains to fortify his judgement by trying to comprehend the truths of the spiritual worlds, only he can defend himself against such delusions. The means which external science offers are insufficient. External science does not provide us with the power of judgement sure enough and strong enough for true discernment in the spiritual world. That is why we say that if information concerning the higher worlds is given us by people who have not carefully fortified the power of judgement — and this can be done through the study of Anthroposophy — such information is always questionable, and must in any case first be checked by the methods attained through genuine training. From this we see that Lucifer and Ahriman do not suspend their temptations when we strive for a higher development.

There is but one power before which Lucifer retreats, and that is morality which burns him like the most dreadful of fires. And there is no means by which to oppose Ahriman other than a power of judgement and discernment schooled by Spiritual Science. For Ahriman flees in terror from the wholesome power of judgement acquired upon Earth. In the main there is nothing to which he has a greater aversion than the qualities we gain from a healthy education of our Ego-consciousness. For we shall see that Ahriman belongs to a very different region far removed from that force of sound judgement which we develop in ourselves. The moment Ahriman encounters this, he receives a terrible shock, for this is something completely unknown to him, and he fears it. The more we apply ourselves in our life to develop this wholesome judgement, the more do we work in opposition to Ahriman. This appears particularly in numbers of cases of people brought before one, who recount from dawn to sunset all they have seen in the spiritual worlds. And if one attempts to give to these people some explanation, and to develop their judgement and discernment, Ahriman generally has them so completely in his power, that they can hardly enter into the discussion. It is even more difficult to get them to listen to reason when Ahriman’s temptations come to them from the auditory side. There are many

more ways of dealing with delusions which appear as images than with those which come acoustically — in voices heard and so forth. Such people have a great aversion to any serious study that would contribute to the development of their Ego-consciousness between birth and death. But it is not they themselves who do not like it; it is the ahrimanic forces that drag them away from it. If one leads those people so far as to develop a wholesome discernment, and they begin to accept instruction, it soon becomes evident that the visions, voices, and hallucinations cease. They were merely ahrimanic chimera, and Ahriman is possessed by fear as soon as he feels that from out of this man there comes forth a wholesome power of judgement.

In fact, the best remedy against the particularly harmful diseases which result in visions and delusory voices induced by Ahriman is to make all efforts to induce the person to acquire a wholesome and rational judgement. In many such cases it is extraordinarily difficult to do this, for the other powers make things very easy for the deluded ones and guide them on. He who attempts to expel this power cannot make things so comfortable, and in consequence finds his task a difficult one; for they maintain that they are being deprived of that which before had led them into the spiritual world. The truth of the matter is that they

are being healed and safeguarded against further encroachment by these evil powers.

We now know what the luciferic and ahrimanic forces abhor. Lucifer has an aversion for humility and modesty in man and is repulsed if we have only such an opinion of ourselves as a wholesome judgement entitles us to hold. On the other hand, he is present, like the flies in the dirty room, whenever the qualities of vanity and ambition arise. All this and the illusions which we engender about ourselves, prepare us to receive Ahriman as well. Nothing can defend us against Ahriman unless we really make an effort to think wholesomely, as life between birth and death teaches us to do. And especially we, who stand on the rock of Spiritual Science, have every reason to emphasise again and again and as intensively as possible, the fact that it is not meet for us as earth-beings to disregard that which is to be given us through life upon earth. People who disdain the acquisition of a wholesome judgement and a rational discernment, and who aspire to a spiritual world without making this effort, are really trying to shun earth life. They, being of the opinion that it is really far too trivial an occupation for them to concern themselves with matters that may lead to comprehension of this life, aspire to soar above it.

They consider themselves superior and it is just this frame of mind which constitutes a fresh cause of pride. For this reason we see constantly that such people who incline towards sentimental fanaticism — ‘Schwärmerei’ — towards a shrinking from being touched by the things of this earth and earth life, refusing to learn because they already have the inner knowledge, have nothing in common with a movement such as ours. Such people say ‘Humanity must enter the Spiritual World.’

Certainly — but there is only one healthy path by which we can enter, and that is the morality that must be acquired upon earth, a morality in the highest sense of the word, which will keep us from over-estimation of ourselves, and will make us less subservient to our impulses, greeds and passions, but which on the other hand will be an active, wholesome co-operation with the conditions of earth life, and not a desire to soar above such conditions.

Here we have again drawn from out of the depths of karma something connected with the depths of spiritual life. This may be of great value, but nothing from the spiritual world is of value to the development of man and of his individuality unless it be brought

forth from the spiritual world for a wholesome reason, and with morality.

When considering all the discussions of our last lecture and those of to-day we shall ask: Why should not the luciferic influence, just for the very reason that it worked earlier and has been transformed into illness, and then equalised through the pain, why should it not call forth in man, draw after it, as it were, the ahrimanic influence? And why should not that which causes us pain and announces the luciferic influence of a disease, why should not the ahrimanic influence take part in this as a consequence of the luciferic influence? But how does the ahrimanic influence work? How are the temptations of Ahriman turned into causes of illness? How do they manifest in later incarnations?

Whatever is to be traced to ahrimanic influence is indirectly attributable to Lucifer; when, however, the luciferic influence has been so strong as immediately to call forth the ahrimanic influence, then this influence is the more malicious. It anchors itself not only in the transgressions of the astral body, but in those of the etheric body. It manifests itself in a consciousness lying deeper than our pain consciousness, causing damage not necessarily

accompanied by pain, damage that renders useless the organ which it attacks.

Let us suppose that in one incarnation an ahrimanic influence had been exercised on a being bringing with it certain consequences. Now the man passes through the period between death and a new birth, and reappears in a new incarnation. Then it will become manifest that some organ has been attacked by Ahriman; in other words, the etheric body has entered this organ more deeply than it should — more deeply than normal. In such a case, precisely because of this defective organ, the man is even more open to temptations of error which are the work of Ahriman upon earth. By means of the organ which owes its defect to ahrimanic influence, and into which the etheric body has too deeply penetrated, the man would, if he were to experience the whole of this process, become even more enmeshed in what Ahriman can effect, namely, ‘Maya.’ Since nothing however produced by the material world as Maya can be carried into the spiritual world, the spiritual world withdraws further from him. For in that world there is to be found only truth and no illusion. The more he becomes entangled in the illusions effected by Ahriman, the more are we impelled to enter even further into the external world of the senses, into the

illusions of the physical senses, much further than would be the case without the defective organ.

A counteracting effect comes into play, however, just as we have the effect of pain counteracting the luciferic influence. This counteracting effect will operate in such a way that the moment there is any danger of our being linked too closely with the physical world of the senses, and of our losing the forces which lead us up into the spiritual world, in that moment the organ is destroyed; it will either be paralysed or else rendered too weak to be effective. A process of destruction takes place. Thus if we see an organ approaching destruction, we must realise that we owe this to beneficial forces; the organ is taken from us so that we may find our way back into the spiritual world. When there is no alternative of escape, certain forces do in fact destroy our organs or weaken them so that we may not become too greatly entangled in Maya or illusion and may find our way back into the spiritual world.

Let us take the case of a person who has a disease of the liver, but such as is not accompanied by pain. We are here dealing with the effect of a preceding ahrimanic influence which has resulted in this disorder in the liver. If this organ had not been taken from him,

the forces connected with a deeper penetration by the etheric body would have led him too far into Maya.

Sagas and myths have always known of the deepest wisdom, and have expressed it. Of this the liver is a very good example. It is an organ which can most easily be exposed to the danger of driving man into the physical illusory world, and at the same time the liver is the organ which binds us to the earth. This truth is connected with the fact that precisely that being who, according to the legend, gave to man the force which leads him into earthly life and which makes him very active there — namely, Prometheus — should have his liver gnawed by a vulture. A vulture gnaws at his liver, not because this would cause Prometheus any severe pain, for in that case the legend would not correspond with physiological facts! The vulture gnaws at the liver because it does not hurt. By this it is indicated that Prometheus brought about something which could entangle men more deeply in the ahrimanic illusion, if a counteracting effect could not be produced. Occult records are always in accord with the truths which we make known in Spiritual Science.

I have shown you to-day by a simple analysis of facts that it is the beneficial powers which bring pain

to us to react against the influence of Lucifer. Let us compare this with the records of the Old Testament. After Lucifer's influence had made itself felt, as is symbolised by the serpent's temptation of Eve, Lucifer's adversaries had to inflict pain to hinder what Lucifer was trying to achieve in men. The powers which opposed Lucifer had then to appear and disclose that thenceforth humanity should know pain. This was done by Jehovah, or Jahveh, when He said: 'In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children.'

Usually we do not fully appreciate these sayings of the biblical records until we possess the explanations of Spiritual Science. Later we realise how profound these records are. Before we can speak about the passage: 'In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children,' we must study karma, for only when the time comes shall we be able to give an explanation. For this reason it is of little use to ask for an explanation of this or that passage from occult records before having attained the required state in one's occult development. It is then not good to ask what is the meaning of this or that. We must be patient and wait until we have reached the required stage. For with explanations alone we shall arrive at nothing.

Thus we see our life affected by the luciferic powers on the one side, and on the other by the powers opposed to Lucifer. Then the ahrimanic powers intrude into our lives, and we must realise that those powers which incapacitate our organs when we fall a prey to ahrimanic influences are to be counted among the beneficent powers, whose adversary is no other than Ahriman. If we set out from all that has been said here, we shall be able to get an insight into the complicated structure of human nature, and we shall arrive at the following conclusion; the luciferic powers are those that have remained behind during the ancient Moon period, and to-day during our Earth evolution they influence human life by means of forces which are really Moon forces, and which can only operate in that cosmic plan which is working in accordance with those forces which oppose Lucifer. These forces are not within our Earth evolution. Thus does Lucifer influence the plans of another being.

We can now go back to an earlier epoch. If on the one side we perceive that on the Moon, beings remained behind in their development, so as to intervene in human life upon Earth, it may seem feasible that also upon the ancient Sun there remained behind beings who played a part upon the Moon analogous to that played by the luciferic powers

upon Earth at present. In the present human being we observe what may be described as a conflict — the conflict between the luciferic powers which penetrate into our astral body, and those benevolent powers which can affect us only through our Ego and through our earth achievement. For the powers opposed to Lucifer can only act upon us through our Ego. If we acquire a clear insight into, and a true valuation of ourselves, we do so only with the help of those powers which affect our Ego. For this we must make use of our Ego. Therefore we may say that while our Ego struggles with the luciferic powers, Jahveh, or Jehovah, is fighting within us against Lucifer. That which watches over the ordered cosmic design is fighting against that which rebels against this design and against its exclusiveness. Our innermost being stands in the midst of this strife, between Lucifer and other beings. We ourselves are the battlefield of this struggle, and the fact that we are the battlefield in this fight draws us into karma, but only indirectly, through the fact that this battle is fought against Lucifer. If on the contrary we turn our gaze outward, we are attracted by the influence of the ahrimanic powers. Something is enacted that comes from outside, and here Ahriman enters within us.

We know that upon the ancient Moon dwelt beings who passed that time through their human stage, as we are now passing through it in the course of Earth evolution. In the *Akashic Records* [See Note 1] and in *Occult Science* these beings are referred to as Angels, Angeloi and Dhyanis — the name does not matter. Within these beings took place a battle similar to the luciferic battle within our own souls — a battle provoked by those beings who had remained behind upon the Sun. This battle upon the Moon is in no way concerned with our inner Ego for on the Moon we did not yet possess our Ego. It is not concerned with anything in which our Ego takes part. Upon the Moon it took place ‘within the bosom of the Angels.’ And so these beings developed in a way which was possible only through the influence of the other beings who had stayed behind during the Sun evolution. These beings who played the same part with regard to the Angeloi that to-day the luciferic beings play with regard to ourselves were the ahrimanic beings which, during the whole of the Sun evolution, remained behind as did the luciferic beings during the Moon evolution. That is why we can only indirectly encounter these beings. It was Ahriman who, as it were, acted as tempter within the breast of the Angeloi, and he was active within them. Because of him the Angeloi had become what they then became,

and they have carried over with them what they acquired through Ahriman, as well as the good they then acquired.

The good we have attained through Lucifer is the possibility of discrimination between good and evil, the free faculty of discrimination, and our free will. All this we may attain only through Lucifer. The Angels, however, have carried over into the Earth the fruits of their struggle with the ahrimanic powers, and this has fitted them for their present task as spiritual beings which surround us. Our inner Ego is not concerned with and takes no part in what these beings then experienced, nor in the effects of their experiences. We shall see, however, that we receive indirectly such experiences ourselves, because the ahrimanic influence acts upon us. Through Ahriman, therefore, these beings have attained certain results caused during their Moon existence and these results are introduced into our Earth existence. Let us try to trace in our Earth existence the effect of the ahrimanic battle of that time.

If that ahrimanic battle had not taken place on the ancient Moon, these beings could not have brought into our Earth existence that which once formed part of the ancient Moon existence. For that would have

ceased to exist after the ancient Moon had perished. Through the ahrimanic influence, the Angels became entangled in the Moon existence, just as we, through the luciferic influence, become entangled in Earth existence. They received in their innermost nature something of the Moon element and transported it into our Earth existence. Because of this they are in a position to raise up the forces which will prevent our Earth from succumbing entirely to the luciferic influence. In its totality our Earth would have succumbed to Lucifer's influence if the results of the Angels' battle against Ahriman upon the Moon had not been brought into our Earth existence.

What then are the proceedings in the existence of the Earth which we describe as the normal? When our present solar system organised itself in accordance with the goal of our Earth, that which we see as the regular movements of the Earth and of the planets began, and that brought it about that the seasons of the year succeed each other in regular succession, that we have sunshine and rain, that our fruits ripen in the fields, and so on. Those are conditions which repeat themselves over and over again according to the rhythm of the Cosmos which shaped itself for the present existence after the Moon existence descended into the twilight. But within the Earth existence works

Lucifer; and we shall see that he works a good deal more than merely in the domain into which we are able to follow him in man himself, which he nevertheless has made his most important domain. Even if Lucifer were to be found only in the Earth existence, man would nevertheless, through all the conditions which are determined by the regular course of the planets round the Sun, through the changes of summer and winter, rain and sunshine and so on, have fallen into what we may call luciferic temptation. If man were to receive all that could come to him from a well-ordered Cosmos, and everything which the regular rhythmic movements of the solar system could produce, if only those laws prevailed which are adapted to our present Cosmos, man would still fall under the luciferic influence, and would prefer his comfortable life to a life of striving after his cosmic welfare, preferring the regular course to that which he ought to achieve for himself.

Therefore opposing forces had to be created. Forces were necessary which would intervene in the normal cosmic phenomena and bring about events which, on the old Moon, were highly beneficial and normal, but which, when they work on the Earth existence to-day, are abnormal and endanger its regular course. These influences appear in such a way that they correct that

which would occur if the rhythm alone existed, giving the tendency to comfortable living, to comfort, to ease and luxury; and we see such forces, for instance, manifesting themselves in violent hailstorms. So when that which otherwise would be produced by the regular forces of the Earth is destroyed, a correction is in these cases brought about which on the whole works beneficially — even although man cannot at first see it — because there is a higher reason at work than can be perceived by man. When the hail drives down into the fields, we may then say: Upon the old Moon these forces which work in the hail were the regular ones, just as to-day are those which bring blessings in the rain and the sunshine; but they rush in, in order to correct that which otherwise would be produced by the luciferic influence. And when the regular course is again re-established, they rush in again to effect further correction. Everything that leads to further progressive evolution belongs to the forces of the earth itself. When the volcano throws out its lava, forces are working in it which are retarded forces brought over from the old Moon in order that they should bring about the correction in the Earth life. We shall find that much that comes from outside finds its justification in the general march of evolution. We shall see later how this is connected with the human Ego-consciousness.

But one point on which we must be clear is that these matters represent only one side of human existence, of Earth existence, and of the cosmic existence in general. If on the one hand we see in the destruction of an organ the beneficent activity of spiritual powers, and if we have found to-day that the whole course of Earth evolution must be rectified by forces springing from the ancient Moon existence, we must now ask how it is that we as Earth men on the other hand must try to rectify the harmful influences of the ancient Moon forces. We already feel that as Earth men we have not the right to wish for volcanic eruptions and earthquakes, nor may we ourselves destroy organs in order to assist the beneficent effect of the ancient Moon forces. But we can also admit, and justifiably, that should an epidemic break out, it will lead man to seek for the balancing of some imperfection within himself, and we may surmise that man is driven into certain conditions in order to suffer some injury, the conquest of which will draw him nearer to perfection.

What then of hygienic and sanitary measures? Might not someone say: ‘If epidemics may prove beneficial, is it then not wrong to take measures conducive to health and preventive of disease?’ One might arrive at the conclusion that nothing should be done to obviate

natural catastrophes and that this conclusion is entirely supported by our lectures of yesterday and today.

We shall see that this is not the case, yet again only on certain conditions. For only now are we rightly prepared to understand in our next discussion how on the one hand beneficial forces may cause injury to an organ, so that we may escape the effect of Maya, and yet, on the other hand, to become conscious of the effect we produce by the use of sanitary and hygienic measures against disease.

We shall see that we have here arrived at a case which so often arises where there is an apparent contradiction, and where we are impelled by the entire force of this contradiction. In such a case we are nearer to the point at which the ahrimanic powers may exert the greatest influence upon us. At no time is the danger of illusion greater than when we have reached such a deadlock. For we now say that the forces which render an organ useless are beneficent forces because they work in opposition to Ahriman; therefore those who take steps against disease are working against humanity, for hygienic measures would limit this beneficial reaction.

We have reached a deadlock, and it is well that we have been led into this contradiction so that we may reflect upon the fact that such are possible, and may even constitute good discipline for our mind. For when we have seen how we can draw ourselves by our own initiative out of this seeming contradiction, then we shall have arrived at a result by which we may fortify ourselves against the illusions of Ahriman.

Note

Now published under the title, *Cosmic Memory* by Rudolf Steiner, pub. Harper & Row, New York **1981**

8. Karma of the Higher Beings

IF we wish to resolve the contradiction which was placed before us at the end of yesterday's lecture, we must to-day once more look back upon the two forces, the two principles, which in the course of time have appeared to us to stimulate and also at the same time to regulate our karma.

We have seen that our karma is brought into action only through the influences which the luciferic powers bring to bear upon our astral body, and that through the temptations of these powers we are led into expressions of feelings, impulses and passions, which in a certain way make us less perfect than we should otherwise be. Whilst acting upon us, the luciferic influences call forth the ahrimanic influences whose forces do not act from within, but from without, working upon and in us by means of all that confronts us externally. Thus it is Ahriman who is evoked by Lucifer, and we human beings are vitally involved in the conflict of these two principles. When we find ourselves caught in the clutches of either Lucifer or Ahriman, we must endeavour to progress by triumphing over the ill that has been inflicted upon us. This interplay of activity of the luciferic and ahrimanic

powers around us can be understood quite clearly if we consider from a somewhat different aspect the case we alluded to in the last lecture — the case where the person succumbs to ahrimanic influence, whereby he experiences all kinds of deceptive images and illusions. He believes that knowledge of one thing or another has been specially imparted to him, or is in one direction or another making an impression upon him, while another person who had preserved a sound power of judgement would easily recognise that the person in question has succumbed to errors and delusions. Last time we spoke of those cases of clairvoyant delusions regarding the spiritual world, clairvoyance in the invidious sense, and we have also seen that there is no other, or at least no more favourable defence against the delusions of false clairvoyants than a sound power of judgement acquired during our physical life between birth and death.

What has been said in our last lecture is of great significance and of fundamental importance if we are dealing with clairvoyant aberrations, for in the case of clairvoyance not attained through regular training, through systematic exercises under strict and proper direction, but showing itself through old inherited characteristics, in images, or else in hearing of sounds

— in the case of such false clairvoyance we shall always find that it diminishes, or even ceases altogether if the person in question finds the opportunity and has the inclination seriously to take up anthroposophical studies, or to take up a training that is rational and normal. So we can say that a person who has a wrong perception of the super-sensible always finds that the true sources of knowledge, if he is susceptible to them, will invariably prove helpful to him and lead him back to the right path. On the contrary, we all know that if someone through the complexities of karma has arrived at a condition in which he develops symptoms of persecution mania, or megalomania, he will develop a whole system of delusive ideas, all of which he can substantiate most logically but which are nevertheless delusive. It may happen for instance that he thinks quite correctly and logically in every other department of life, but has the fixed idea that he is being pursued everywhere for some reason or another. He will be able, wherever he may be, to form the cleverest combinations out of the most trivial happenings: ‘Here again is that clique whose one and only aim it is to inflict this or that upon me.’ And in the cleverest way he will prove to you how well founded is his suspicion.

Thus a person may be perfectly logical and yet give expression to certain symptoms of madness. It will be quite impossible to impress such a person by logical reasoning. On the contrary, if we make use of logical reasoning in such a case it may well happen that this will challenge the delusive ideas and the victim will try and find even more conclusive proof of the assertion resulting from his persecution mania. When we speak in the terms of Spiritual Science things must be taken literally. If a little while ago, and also the last time, we pointed to the fact that in the knowledge of Spiritual Science we possess an opposing force against any aberration of clairvoyant powers, we were then referring to something entirely different from what we are now discussing. We are not now concerned with influencing the person in question by means of revelations of Spiritual Science. Such a person is not amenable to any reasoning derived from the realm of ordinary common sense. Why should this be so?

In a disease whose symptoms are such as we have described, we have to deal with a karmic cause in previous incarnations. The errors which come from the inner being do not in every case proceed from the present incarnation but from a preceding one. Let us

now try to get an idea of how something may be carried from an earlier into the present incarnation.

For this purpose we must envisage the course of our soul evolution. As external man, we consist of physical body, etheric body and astral body. In the course of time, into these sheaths we have built by means of our Ego the sentient soul into the sentient body, the rational or mind soul into etheric body, and a consciousness soul into the physical body. These three soul members we have developed and have built into the three sheaths where they now dwell. Let us suppose that in some incarnation we were so tempted by Lucifer, or in other words, we developed such egotistical impulses, greed, and other instincts that our soul was laden with transgressions. These transgressions may be in the sentient soul, the rational or mind soul, or in the consciousness soul. This then is the cause which in some future incarnation will be implanted in one of the three soul members. Let us suppose that there was a fault attributable especially to the forces of the rational soul. In the state between death and rebirth this will be so metamorphosed that it will be manifested in the etheric body. Thus in the new incarnation we encounter in the etheric body an effect that may be traced back to a cause in the rational soul of a

preceding incarnation. But the rational soul of the next incarnation will again work independently in that incarnation, and it makes a difference whether this human being has previously committed this fault or not. If he has committed it in an earlier incarnation, he now carries his fault in his etheric body. It is now deeper rooted and is not in the rational soul but in the etheric body. But such rationality and good sense as we may acquire upon the physical plane will affect only our rational soul, and will not affect the activity of our rational soul in an earlier incarnation which has already been woven into the etheric body. For this reason it may happen that the forces of the rational soul, as we now encounter them in human beings, are doing their work logically, so that the real inner being is altogether intact; but that the co-operation of the rational soul with the diseased part of the etheric body provokes error in a certain direction. We can affect the rational soul with reasons which can be brought forward upon the physical plane, but we cannot directly affect the etheric body. That is why neither logic nor persuasion will have any effect. Logic would be of little use were we to place someone in front of a convex mirror so that he could see his distorted image, and then try to convince him that he is mistaken in thus seeing the image. He will nevertheless see a distorted image. In the same way does it depend upon

the man himself if he morbidly misunderstands a thing, for his logic may be sound in itself but is reflected in a deformed manner by his etheric body.

Thus we can carry within our deep organism the karmic effects of an earlier incarnation, and we can actually demonstrate that the defect is present in a certain part of the organism, as in our etheric body for instance. We see here how under the luciferic influence we have contracted an evil in a previous incarnation, and how between death and a new birth it has been transformed. In the interim between death and a rebirth is accomplished the transformation of something internal into something external, and then Ahriman works against us through our own etheric body. This shows how Ahriman is drawn by Lucifer to approach our etheric body. Previously the transgression was luciferic; it has been so transformed that, as it were, a receipt for it is given us by Ahriman in the next incarnation, and then it is a question of expelling the defect from one’s etheric body. This can be done only by a deeper intervention in our organism than can be achieved in one incarnation by the ordinary means of external reason.

He who in a certain incarnation passes through such an experience as that of persecution mania will, when

again passing through the gate of death, be confronted by all the actions that he has performed in consequence of this ahrimanic defect, and he will see the absurdity of what he has done. From this will spring the new force which will completely heal him for his next incarnation; for he can be healed only by realising henceforth that the way he acted under the influence of the symptoms in question was absurd in the external world. We now realise how we can assist such healing. If someone suffers from such mad ideas we shall not succeed in healing him by means of logical reasoning, for such reasoning will only call forth even more violent opposition. But we shall achieve some result, especially when such a disposition shows in early youth, if we bring the sufferer into such a situation where the consequences of these symptoms prove themselves to be obviously absurd. If we make him face facts called forth by himself, and which react upon him in a crassly absurd manner, we can heal him in a certain way.

We can also have a healing influence if we ourselves are so far in possession of the truths of Spiritual Science, that they have become the inner possession of our soul. If they have become such an integral part of us, then the whole of our personality will be radiating these truths of Spiritual Science. With these

truths that stream into life between birth and death, filling it and yet projecting this life itself; with these revelations of the super-sensible world we can achieve more than with external rational truths. When nothing can be achieved by external logical reasoning we shall, if we patiently apply the truths of Spiritual Science, be able to bring impulses to bear upon the person in question, so that we can, as it were, achieve in the one incarnation what could otherwise take place only by the circuitous passage from one incarnation to another, namely, through penetration of the etheric body by the rational soul. For the truths of the physical plane cannot bridge the chasm between the sentient soul and the astral body, between the rational and the etheric body, or even between the consciousness soul and the physical body. That is why we shall always find that however much wisdom concerning the material world one may absorb upon the physical plane, this wisdom will have but little relationship to the world of his feeling — what we might term a permeation of his astral body by the corresponding impulses and passions. One may be most learned, may have much theoretical knowledge of things belonging to the physical world, may have become an ‘old professor,’ and yet may not have attained within to a transformation of the impulses, feelings and passions that dwell within the astral body.

One may indeed know a great deal about the physical world and yet be a gross egotist, because such impulses have been absorbed in youth. Naturally the two things can go hand in hand, external material science and cultivation of the astral and etheric bodies from within. In the same way one can possess truths and amass such knowledge as may become forces for the rational soul in regard to the physical plane, and yet be incapable of bridging the deep chasm existing between the rational soul and the etheric body. In external truths, though one may be learning an enormous amount it will seldom be found that what has been learnt will have any power over the formative forces of the body.

In the case of a person who is affected by these truths to such an extent that they get a hold upon his entire being, we may find that in the course of ten years the whole of his physiognomy will have changed so that upon it we can read the conflict he has experienced. We may also notice in his gestures if, for instance, with self-restraint he has become tranquil. These things will find their way into the formative forces of the organism, and even the most delicate and subtle parts of the organism will be stirred thereby. If what is grasped by our mind is not exclusively concerned with the physical plane we still

shall become different after ten years, but the change will then have kept to the normal course in the same way as dispositions develop and change in a normal way in ordinary life. In the course of ten years we may possibly develop a different facial expression, but unless we have bridged the chasm from within, this change will have been produced by external influences. In this case we are not transformed by a force taking possession of us from within. It is therefore obvious that only the truly spiritual which really unites itself with our innermost being is able to have a transforming effect upon our formative forces during the period between birth and death, and that this transition, this bridging of the chasm will assuredly take place in the karmic activity between death and re-birth. If, for instance, those worlds through which we pass in the interim between death and a new birth are impregnated with the experiences of the sentient soul, then they will appear in the next incarnation as formative, shaping forces.

In this way the reciprocal activity of Ahriman and Lucifer has become intelligible. And now we ask how this combined reciprocal activity presents itself when things are even more distant, when, for instance, the luciferic influence has not merely to cross the abyss

between the rational soul and the etheric body, but has, as it were, a longer way to go.

Let us suppose that in one life we are particularly susceptible to the influence of Lucifer. In such a case, we should with the whole of our inner being become considerably less perfect than we were before, and in the kamaloca period we should have this most vividly before our eyes, so that we should resolve to make a tremendous effort in order to balance this imperfection. This desire we incorporate as tendency, and in the next incarnation, with what have now become formative forces, we shape our new organism so that it must have a tendency towards balancing our earlier experiences. But let us suppose that the release of these luciferic influences had been instigated by something external, by an external greed, there must have been the influence of Lucifer. Anything external could not have affected us had not Lucifer been active within us. Thus we have within us a tendency to compensate for that which we have become through the luciferic influence.

But as we have seen, the luciferic influence of one incarnation challenges and attracts to itself the ahrimanic influence in the next incarnation, so that the two act in alternation. We have seen the luciferic

influence to be such that we can perceive it with our consciousness; that is to say, however, that our consciousness can still just reach down into our astral body. We have said that it is due to the luciferic influence when we are conscious of pain, but we cannot descend to those realms that may be termed the consciousness of the etheric and physical bodies. Even in dreamless sleep we have a consciousness, but one of so low a degree that we are not able to be aware of it. But this does not necessarily mean that we are inactive in this consciousness which is possessed normally for instance by plants, consisting as they do only of physical and etheric body. Plants live continually in the consciousness of dreamless sleep. The consciousness of our etheric and physical body is present also in our waking condition in the daytime, but we cannot descend to it. That this consciousness may he active, however, is shown when we perform in our sleep somnambulistic actions of which we later know nothing. It is this dreamless sleep consciousness that is active. The ordinary consciousness and the astral consciousness cannot penetrate to the sphere of somnambulistic action.

But because in the daytime we are living in our Ego-consciousness and astral consciousness, we must not believe that the other kinds of consciousness are

absent. It is only that we are not aware of them. Let us suppose that through the luciferic influence of an earlier incarnation we have provoked a strong ahrimanic influence which will be unable to act upon our ordinary consciousness. It will, however, attack the consciousness which dwells within our etheric body, and this consciousness will not only conduce to a certain organisation of our etheric body but will impel us even to acts which will be so expressed, that the consciousness of the etheric body will realise that we must discard from within us the effects of the luciferic influence to which we had succumbed in an earlier incarnation; it will realise further that this can be accomplished only through a deed in direct contradiction to the earlier luciferic transgression.

Let us suppose that dominated by the luciferic influence, we have been led to supplant a point of view which was religious or spiritual by the point of view of the man who says: ‘I want to enjoy life,’ and thus plunges headlong into gross material pleasures. This would challenge the ahrimanic influence in such a way as to provoke the opposite process. It then happens that passing through life we seek a spot where it is possible at one leap to return to spirituality from a life of the senses. In the one, we went with one plunge into gross material pleasures, and in the other

we try by one leap to return to a spiritual life. Our ordinary consciousness is not aware of this, but the mysterious subconsciousness which is chained to the physical body and the etheric body now urges us towards a place where we may await a thunderstorm, where there is an oak, a bench placed beneath, and where the lightning will strike. In this case the subconscious mind has urged us to make good what we have done in an earlier incarnation. Here we see the opposite process. This is what is meant by an effect of luciferic influence in an earlier life, and, as consequence, an ahrimanic influence in the present life. Ahriman’s co-operation is necessary to enable us to put aside our ordinary consciousness to such an extent that our whole being will obey exclusively the consciousness of the etheric or of the physical body.

In this way many events become comprehensible. However, we must beware of concluding that every accident should be traced to something similar, for this would be taking a very narrow view of karma. There are currents of thought even in our movement that take a really narrow view of karma. Were karma really as they conceive it, the whole world order would have to be specially arranged in the interests of each single human being, so that each life should run harmoniously and be duly compensated — the

conditions of one life would be always combined in such a way as to result in an exact balancing of the consequences of an earlier life. This standpoint cannot however be maintained. Suppose someone were to say to a man who had met with an accident: ‘This is your karma; this is the karmic result of your earlier life, and you at that time brought it on yourself.’ Were the same man to have some stroke of luck, then the other would say: ‘This can be traced back to a good deed you did in an earlier life.’ If such words are to have any value, the person should have known what happened in an earlier life which is supposed to have produced this result. If he had knowledge of the earlier life, he would there see the causes coming from that life, and he would have to look towards later incarnations for the effects. From this it is logical to conclude that in every incarnation there are certain prime causes which come into play from incarnation to incarnation, and these will be karmically balanced in the next life. When examining the next life we can observe the causes. If an accident happens, however, for which in spite of all means at our disposal we can find no causes in an earlier life, then we must conceive that this will be balanced in a later life. Karma is not fate. From every life something is carried into later lives.

If we understand this, we shall also understand that we may find new events in our life which are of profound significance. Let us remember that the great events in the course of human evolution could not come about without being carried by certain people. At a certain moment people must take over the intentions of evolution. What would the development of the Middle Ages have been, had not Charlemagne intervened at a given moment! How could the spiritual life of olden times have developed if Aristotle had not at a certain time done his work! We see from this that people like Charlemagne, Aristotle, Luther and so on, did not live at a certain period for their own sakes but for the sake of the world. Nevertheless, their personal fates are intimately connected with world events. Should we conclude from this, however, that what they accomplished is the expiation or the recompense for their previous merits or transgressions?

Take the case of Luther. We cannot just simply ascribe everything he experienced and endured to his karma; we must be clear that those things which are due to happen in the course of human evolution must come about through human agency and that these individual agents have to be brought out of the spiritual world, without consideration whether they are fully ready in themselves. They are born for the

purposes of human evolution, and a karmic path has to be interrupted or lengthened, so that the individuality concerned may appear at a certain time. In such cases a destiny is thrust upon men which need have no relation to their past karma. But to have achieved something between birth and death sets up on earth later karmic causes, so that though it is true that a Luther was born for humanity and had to bear a fate which had no vital association with his former karma, yet what he accomplished on earth will be connected with his later karma. Karma is a universal law, and each experiences it for himself; but we must not only look back to our former incarnations; we must also look forward. From this point of view it is only in a subsequent life that we can judge and justify earlier incarnations, for some of the events of this life do not lie in the karmic path.

Let us take a case which actually happened. In a natural catastrophe a number of people perished. It is not at all necessary to believe that it was in their karma that they all should thus perish together; this would be a cheap supposition. Everything need not always be thus traced back to earlier transgressions. There is an instance that has been investigated of a number of people perishing in an elemental catastrophe which resulted in a close alliance of these

people at a later period, and, owing to their common fate, they gained the strength to undertake something in common. Through this catastrophe they were able to turn from materialism and brought with them in their next incarnation a disposition to spirituality.

What happened in that case? If we go back to the previous life we find that in this instance the common destruction took place during an earthquake; at the moment of the earthquake the futility of materialism presented itself to their souls, and so a mind directed towards the spiritual developed within them. We can see from this how people whose mission it was to bring something spiritual into the world, were prepared for it in this way, which demonstrates the wisdom of evolution. This case has been investigated and authenticated by Spiritual Science. So we can show how primary events can enter human life, and that it cannot always be traced back to an earlier transgression if one person or several people meet with an early death in a catastrophe or an accident. Such an event may appear as a primary cause, and will be balanced in the next life.

Other cases may occur. It may happen that someone will have to meet with an early death in two or three consecutive incarnations. This may occur because this

individuality has been chosen to bring to mankind in the course of three incarnations certain gifts that can be given only when living in the material world with such forces as result from a ‘growing body’. To be living in a body that has developed up to the thirty-fifth year is quite different from living in a body of greater age. For up to our thirty-fifth year we direct our forces towards the body, so that the forces unfold from within. But from the thirty-fifth year onward begins a life in which we progress only inwardly — a life in which we must continually attack the external forces with our life forces. From the point of view of the inner organisation, these two halves of life differ in every respect the one from the other. Let us suppose that according to the wisdom which presides over human evolution we stand in need of such people who can flourish only when they do not have to fight against external stress which comes in the second half of life, then it may be that the incarnations are brought to a premature close. There are such cases. At our meetings we have already pointed out an individuality who appeared successively as a great prophet, a great painter, and a great poet and whose life was always brought to an end through premature death, because what had to be accomplished by him in the course of these three incarnations was possible only by interruption of the incarnation before he had

entered the second half of life. Here we see the strange interlacing of individual human karma and the general karma of mankind.

We can go still further and find certain karmic causes in the general karma of mankind, whose effects show only at a later period. Thus the individual again sees himself caught up into the general karma of humanity.

If we consider the post-Atlantean evolution, we find the Graeco-Latin period in the middle, preceded by the Egyptian-Chaldean period, and followed by our period — the fifth period of civilisation. Our period will be followed by a sixth and seventh cultural epoch. I have also pointed out on other occasions that in a certain respect there are cycles in succession of the various civilisations, so that the Graeco-Latin culture stands by itself, but that the Egyptian-Chaldean period is repeated in our own. Also in this course, I have already pointed out that Kepler lived in our period, and that the same individuality lived earlier in an Egyptian body, and was in that incarnation under the influence of the wise Egyptian priests who directed his gaze to the celestial vault, so that the mysteries of the stars were revealed to him from above. All this was brought further in his Kepler-

incarnation which took place in the fifth period, and which, in a certain way, is a repetition of the third.

But we can go still further. From the standpoint of Spiritual Science we can truly assert that most people to-day are blind when they consider world evolution and human life. These similarities, these repetitions, these cyclic lives can be followed even in their details. If we take a certain moment in human evolution, say for instance the year 747 B.C. we shall find that it constitutes a sort of ‘Hypomochlion,’ a kind of zero-point, and that what lies before and after this point corresponds in quite a definite way. We may go back to an epoch of the Egyptian evolution, and there we find certain ritualistic ordinances and commands which appeared as given by the gods. And this they actually were. These ordinances related to certain ablutions which the Egyptians had to perform by day. They were regulated by custom and by certain ritualistic prescriptions, and the Egyptians believed that they could only live in the manner desired by the gods, if on this or that day they were to undertake a certain number of ablutions. This was a command of the gods, that found expression in a certain cult of cleanliness, and if in the interim we encounter a period somewhat less clean, we now again, in our own period, encounter hygienic measures such as are

given to humanity for materialistic reasons. Here we see a repetition of what was lost at a corresponding period in Egypt. The fulfilment of what happened earlier is represented in the general karma in a most remarkable manner. Only the general character is always different. Kepler in his Egyptian incarnation had directed his gaze up to the starry sky, and what that individuality there perceived, was expressed in the great spiritual truths of Egyptian astrology. In his reincarnation during that period of materialistic aims, the same individuality expressed these facts in a manner corresponding with our period, in his three materialistically coloured ‘Kepler laws.’ In ancient Egypt the laws of cleanliness were laws of Divine revelation. The Egyptian believed that he was fulfilling his duty to humanity by caring for his particular cleanliness at every opportunity. This preoccupation for cleanliness comes to the fore again today, but under the influence of a mentality which is entirely materialistic. Modern man does not think that he is serving the gods when he is obeying such rules, but that he is serving himself. It is nevertheless a reappearance of what went before.

Thus all things are in a certain way cyclically fulfilled. And now we begin to understand that the matters that we summarised last time in a

contradiction, are not as simple as one is inclined to suppose. If at a certain period people were not able to conceive certain measures against epidemics, these were times at which men could not do so because, according to the general wise world plan, the epidemics had to take effect in order to give human souls an opportunity of balancing what had been effected through the ahrimanic influence and certain earlier luciferic influences. If other conditions are now being brought about, these too are subject to certain great karmic laws. So we see that these matters cannot be regarded superficially.

How does this agree with our statement that if someone seeks an opportunity of being infected in an epidemic, this is the result of the necessary reaction against an earlier karmic cause. Have we the right now to take hygienic or other measures?

This is a profound question, and we must begin by collecting the necessary material for replying to it. We must understand that where the luciferic and ahrimanic principles are co-operating, whether concurrently or over longer periods, or where they are working against each other, there are manifested certain complications in human life. These complications appear under forms so diverse that we

never see two identical cases. If we study human life, however, we shall find our way in the following manner: if in a particular case we try to discover the combined activity of Lucifer and Ahriman, we shall always find a thread by which this connection will become clear. We must discriminate clearly between internal and external man. Even today we had to differentiate sharply between that which is expressed by the rational soul, and that which appears within the etheric body as a result of the rational soul. We must examine the continuity in which karma is accomplished, and we must at the same time understand that we have still the possibility of influencing our inner being by means of certain karmic influences, so that in future a new karmic compensation may be prepared by the inner being. For this reason, it is possible for a being in an earlier life to have experienced sensations, feelings and so forth that have developed in him a want of love towards his fellow-creatures. Let us suppose, for instance, that he had passed through an experience whereby through karmic action he had become uncharitable. It may well happen that we, following for a time a downward grade, beget evil. We at first descend in order to develop the contrary impetus that will cause us to re-ascend. Let us suppose that a being, by yielding to certain influences, tends towards

uncharitableness. This uncharitableness will in a later life appear as karmic result, and will develop inner forces in his organism. We can then act in two ways — consciously, or else unconsciously. In our epoch we have not progressed so far as to do it consciously. With such a person we can take precautions by which these characteristics in his organism, derived from uncharitableness, will be driven out and we may act in such a way that the effect that is expressed in the external organism as a lack of charity will be counteracted. By these means, however, the soul will not be cleansed of all uncharitableness, but only the external organ of uncharitableness will have been expelled. For if we do nothing further, we shall have accomplished only half of our task, perhaps even nothing at all. We may perhaps have helped this person physically, externally, but we shall not have given succour to his soul. Now that the physical expression of uncharitableness has been removed he will not be able to give expression to this uncharitableness, but he will have to retain it within his inner organism until a future incarnation. Let us suppose that a great number of people, because of uncharitableness, had been impelled to absorb certain infectious germs, so that they succumbed to an epidemic. Let us further suppose we were in a position to protect them from this epidemic. We should in such

a case preserve the physical body from the effects of uncharitableness, but we should not have removed the inner tendency towards uncharitableness. The case might be such that, in removing the external expression of uncharitableness, we should undertake the duty of influencing the soul also in such a way as to remove from it the tendency towards a lack of charity. The organic expression of uncharitableness is killed in the most complete sense, in the external bodily sense, by vaccination against smallpox. There, for instance, the following becomes manifest, and has been investigated by Spiritual Science. In one period of civilisation, when there prevailed a general tendency to develop a higher degree of egotism, and uncharitableness, smallpox made its appearance. Such is the fact. In anthroposophy it is our bounded duty to give expression to the truth.

Now it will be clear why in our period the protection of vaccination appeared. We also understand why, among the best minds of our period, there exists a kind of aversion to vaccination. This aversion corresponds to something within, and is the external expression of an inner reality. So if on the one hand we destroy the physical expression of a previous fault, we should, on the other hand, undertake the duty of transforming the materialistic character of such a

person by means of a corresponding spiritual education. This would constitute the indispensable counterpart without which we are performing only half our task. We are merely accomplishing something to which the person in question will himself have to produce a counterpart in a later incarnation. If we destroy the susceptibility to smallpox, we are concentrating only on the external side of karmic activity. If on the one side we go in for hygiene, it is necessary that on the other we should feel it our duty to contribute to the person whose organism has been so transformed, something also for the good of his soul. Vaccination will not be harmful if, subsequent to vaccination, the person receives a spiritual education. If we concentrate upon one side only and lay no emphasis upon the other, we weigh down the balance unevenly. This is really what is felt in those circles which maintain that where hygienic measures go too far, only weak natures will be propagated. This of course is not justifiable, but we see how essential it is that we should not undertake one task without the other.

Here we approach an important law of human evolution which acts so that the external and the internal must always be counter-balanced, and that it is not permissible to act with regard to the one only,

leaving the other out of consideration. We here get a glimpse of an important relationship, and yet we have not even arrived at the significance of the question: ‘What is the relationship between hygiene and karma?’ As we shall see, the answer to this question will lead us still further into the depths of karma, and we shall further see that there exist karmic relationships between man’s birth and death. In addition, other personalities influence a human life, and man’s free will and karma are in harmony.

9. Karmic Effects of Our Experiences as Men and Women. Death and Birth in Relationship to Karma

AS I have several times pointed out, the great karmic laws can be here only briefly referred to, so that your interest in this almost infinite domain shall be stirred. If you reflect upon all that has been said within the last days, you will no longer be astonished at the idea that man is urged to seek in the external world for compensating effects of karmic causes which he himself has incorporated within his organism. He may, for instance, be driven to a place where he will encounter an infection which will offer him the compensation sought for, or he may even be driven by this need for compensation to what might be termed a ‘fatal accident.’

How does it affect the karmic course, if through some kind of measures we are able to prevent the person from seeking this adjustment?

Let us suppose that by certain hygienic measures we render impossible certain causes, certain maladies towards which the karma of a person draws him. We have already shown that the taking of such measures

in no wise rests with him. We have seen, for instance, that in a certain period a need for cleanliness is felt simply because this inclination that had disappeared in earlier periods, reappears by its reversed repetition in evolution. From this we see that it is in accordance with the great laws of human karma that we at definite periods adopt this or that measure. But it is easy to understand why such measures were not invented before our epoch, for humanity in an earlier epoch was in need of such epidemics from which the world is now delivered by these measures. With regard to the great plans of life, human evolution is subject to definite laws, and we are not in a position to adopt such measures until they will be of significance and utility for the whole of human evolution. For these measures do not spring from the fully conscious life, from the rational life, between birth and death, but they spring rather from the general mind of humanity, so we need only remember that when mankind is ripe for it, and not before, these inventions or discoveries will make their appearance. A brief summary of the history of human evolution upon earth may prove useful.

Let us not forget that our ancestors — that is to say our own souls — dwelt upon the Atlantean continent in bodies quite different from the present human body. This continent was then submerged and it was only

after a definite period that the inhabitants upon the one half of the earth which had emerged were brought into contact with these of the other half. It is only recently that the peoples of Europe have been able again to reach those territories that had emerged on the other side of the submerged Atlantean continent. Indeed, such matters are ordered by great laws. The discovery of one thing or another, the adoption of measures which make it possible to intervene in the realm of karma — these things are not dependent upon the caprice or the will of mankind, but they arrive when they are due to arrive. But notwithstanding, we can influence a person’s karma by removing certain causes which would otherwise have existed, and which would have come to him as a karmic fulfilment. This ‘influencing’ does not mean that we have removed it, but merely that we have changed its direction. Let us suppose that a certain number of people are impelled by karma to seek for certain conditions which would represent to them a karmic compensation. Through hygienic measures these conditions have been removed and can no longer be met. These beings, however, will not be liberated from the karmic effect evoked by their inner being, but rather are they urged to seek other effects. Man cannot escape his karma. Through such measures

he is not freed from that which he would otherwise have sought.

From this we may conclude that if the karmic reparation is escaped in one direction, it will have to be sought in another. When we abolish certain influences, we merely create the necessity of seeking other opportunities and influences. Let us assume that many epidemics and diseases can be traced to the fact that victims are seeking to remove what they have karmically fostered within themselves. This is the case, for instance, with smallpox which is the organ of uncharitableness. Although we may be in a position to remove the possibility of this disease, still the cause of uncharitableness would remain, and the souls in question would then be forced to seek another way for karmic compensation either in this or in another incarnation. The following will help us to understand what actually takes place. It is a fact that, at the present time, many influences and causes are removed which would otherwise have been sought for as adjustment for certain karmic matters with which mankind had burdened itself in earlier periods. But, in removing these influences we only remove the possibility of man’s succumbing to their external effects. We make his external life more pleasant, and also more healthy, but what he would otherwise have

sought as a karmic adjustment in the corresponding disease, will now have to be sought in another direction. People who to-day are saved in regard to health, are at the same time condemned to seek a karmic adjustment in another way. If life to-day is healthier and more agreeable, the soul receives an influence in the opposite sense. Little by little it discovers a certain emptiness — or frustration. If this state of things continued in such a way that the external life became ever more pleasant and healthy, in the materialistic sense of these words, then such souls would have but little inducement to inner progress and there would result an emptiness of the soul. This can be observed even today by anyone who examines life more closely. There has been hardly a single epoch in which so many people have had such pleasant external conditions as is the case today and yet go about with such stagnant and empty souls. That is why such people rush from sensation to sensation. When means permit, they travel from town to town in order to see something, or if they are forced to remain in the same town, they rush night after night from pleasure to pleasure. Yet for all this the soul remains empty, realises the void, and in the end does not know what to seek in the world to fill it. In a life spent in external and physically pleasant conditions the tendency towards materialism is specially marked.

Thus souls become increasingly diseased as external life is rendered more healthy. Least of all should an anthroposophist complain at this because anthroposophy teaches us a true understanding of these matters, and thus gives us knowledge as to where the compensation may be sought. Souls can remain empty only to a certain stage; then through their own elasticity, they rush on to the opposite direction. They seek for something akin to their own souls, and they will then see how greatly they stand in need of an anthroposophical world conception.

We see from this how the results of a materialistic conception of life may well ease external life, but creates difficulties in our inner life, leading us finally from the depths of sufferings to seek spiritual truths. The spiritual world conception as it is today presented by Spiritual Science, thus addresses itself to those souls who cannot find satisfaction through impressions with which the external world can provide them. Souls will continue in their search, and seek ever again for new impressions until their elasticity will act so strongly in the other direction, that they will feel themselves again drawn to a spiritual life. Thus there exists a relationship between hygiene and the future hopes of the world conception of Spiritual Science.

Even today this can be observed in a small way. Today there exist people who add to other superficialities a new superficiality, namely, an interest in the anthroposophical world conception and who take up the anthroposophical world conception as a new sensation. It is inevitable that what is of profound inner significance also appears as fashion, as sensation, and this tendency can be traced in every current of human evolution. But those souls who are truly ripe for anthroposophy are those who fail to find satisfaction from external sensations, and who realise that external science in spite of all its explanations cannot explain certain facts. These are the souls who through their general karma are so prepared that they become united to anthroposophy with the innermost members of their soul life. Spiritual Science forms part of mankind's general karma, and as such will take its place there.

It is thus that we can give an orientation to human karma, but to the extent to which it is the effect of past actions we cannot prevent the reaction upon the individual souls. In some way it comes home.

We can show how logical is the working out of karma in the world, by considering karma where its activity is still independent of morality — where we see it

manifest in the universe, without concerning itself with the moral impulses emanating from the soul of man and leading him to moral or immoral deeds. We shall set before ourselves an aspect of karma in which morality plays no part, but in which something neutral appears as karmic link.

Let us suppose that a woman lives in a certain incarnation. It cannot be denied that this woman, by reason of her sex, will undergo experiences which differ from those of a man, and that these are not merely dependent on her inner soul life, but for the most part they are connected with external happenings, with circumstances in which she will find herself simply because she is a woman, and which will again react upon the whole of the condition and disposition of her soul. We see, therefore, that certain deeds of woman are most intimately connected with the fact of her womanhood. Only in the realm of spiritual companionship is there any equality between man and woman. The further we penetrate into the purely spiritual and into the outer aspect of the human being, the more is accentuated the difference between man and woman in relation to their lives. We can say that woman differs from man also in certain qualities of the soul, and that she inclines more towards those impulses which must be termed

emotional. For this reason we find that psychic experiences come to her more easily than to man. Intellectuality and materialism are, on the contrary, more natural to man’s life, and these strongly influence the soul life. So the psychic and emotional predominate in woman and the intellectual and materialistic in man. Thus it is that there are certain shadings in woman’s soul life by virtue of her womanhood. It has already been described how the qualities we experience in our souls force their way between death and a new birth into our next bodily organism. That which is psychically and emotionally the strongest and that which in the life between birth and death penetrates most deeply into the soul, will have a greater tendency to enter more profoundly into the organism, and to impregnate it far more intensively. And because woman absorbs psychical and emotional impressions, she also receives the experiences of life into the profounder depths of the soul. Man may have richer and also more scientific experiences, but they do not penetrate his soul life as deeply as do those of woman. The whole of the world of her experiences is deeply graven into a woman’s soul. Therefore those experiences will have a stronger tendency to affect the organism, to modify the organism more closely in the future. Thus woman’s life absorbs the tendency towards deeper intervention in

the organism by means of the experiences of one incarnation, and thereby towards the formation of the organism itself in the next incarnation. A deep working into and working through the organism will bring forth a male organism. A male organism appears when the forces of the soul desire to be more deeply graven into matter. From this we see that the effect of woman's experiences in one incarnation results in a male organism in the next incarnation. Occult teaching here shows that there is a connection which lies outside the bounds of morality. For this reason occultism states 'Man is woman's karma.' The male organism of a later incarnation is the result of the experiences and events of a preceding female incarnation. At the risk of arousing in some of those present reflections which may possibly be uncongenial (it always happens that modern man is terrified of incarnating as woman), since these matters are facts, I must illuminate them objectively. What happens in the case of man's experiences?

We shall best understand them if we base them on what has been said before. In man's organism the inner man has penetrated thoroughly into matter, and has embraced it more closely than has woman. Woman retains more spirituality. She does not penetrate so deeply into matter, but keeps her

materiality more flexible. It is characteristic of woman’s nature that she retains a greater degree of free spirituality, and for that reason does not penetrate so profoundly into matter, and especially keeps her brain more flexible. Therefore it is not surprising that women have a special inclination for what is new, especially in the spiritual realm. And it is not by accident, but in accordance with a profound law, that in a movement whose very nature deals with spirituality, there should be found a greater number of women than of men. Any man knows that the male brain is frequently an intractable instrument. On account of its rigidity it offers terrible resistance when one would use it for more flexible lines of thought. It refuses to follow and must be educated by all sorts of means before it can lose its rigidity. With all men this can be a personal experience.

Man’s nature is more condensed, more concentrated; it has been compressed more, rendered more rigid and hard by his inner being of a man; it has been made more material. A more rigid brain is first and foremost an instrument for the intellectual, rather than for the psychic. For intellectuality deals mainly with the physical plane. In this respect we might speak of a brain being frozen to a certain degree and if it is to deal with the finer channels of thought, it

must first be thawed. Therefore a man will be inclined to absorb less of those experiences that are connected with the depths of his own soul life, and what he does absorb does not so deeply. We have an external proof of this in the shallowness of external science, and its comparative failure to comprehend the inner being. Although much thought is expended in a wide circumference, facts are concentrated with but little thoroughness. Let us quote an example of the superficiality of modern science:

Let us suppose a young man is in a college where a rabid Darwinian is lecturing. This is how the advocate of the theory of selection will characterise certain facts: Whence does a cock derive his beautiful iridescent feathers of bluish tints? This is to be traced back to sexual, natural selection; for the cock attracts the hens by his colours, and the hens will choose those from among the cocks who possess these bluish iridescent feathers. In this way the other cocks are ignored, and the consequence is that one particular species is developed. This is progress; this is ‘natural selection’! And the student is glad to know how progressive development is brought about.

Now he goes to the next hall, where physiology of the senses is dealt with. It may well happen that the

student in this second hall will hear the following: Experiments have been made which show how the various colours of the spectrum affect various beings. It can be proved that of the whole colour spectrum, hens, for instance, can only see the colours ranging from green to orange, and red to ultra-red, but not those ranging from blue to violet.

Now a student, if he wants to combine these two statements which really are taught to-day, is forced to regard things superficially. The whole of the theory of natural selection is based on the fact that hens perceive the variegated colours of cocks and that these colours afford them special pleasure. This is not the case, for the colours to them appear raven black.

This is merely an example, but anyone willing to investigate really scientifically will encounter instances of this kind at every step. This will demonstrate that intellectuality does not penetrate very deeply into life but that it remains on the surface. I intentionally chose the more marked examples.

It is not so easy to believe that intellectuality remains external and affects the inner being of man but slightly. And a materialistic mind affects the soul life even less. The consequence of this is that the

being on quitting an incarnation in which he has lived but little in the soul, carries with him the tendency between birth and death to penetrate less deeply into the organism in the next incarnation. He has but little power to do this, and that is why in the next incarnation the organism is less impregnated. So comes the inclination to build up a female body in the next incarnation, and it is therefore correct when occultism says that ‘Woman is man’s karma.’

In this neutral moral domain we see that what we prepare in one incarnation will be an organising force for our body in the next. And these influences intervene profoundly not only in our inner life, but also in our external experiences and deeds. Thus we must say that the fact of having man’s or woman’s experiences in one incarnation, in one way or another determines our external deeds in the next incarnation. Through woman’s experiences we shall be disposed to form a male organism, and, conversely, through man’s experiences a female organism. Only in rare cases will an incarnation in the same sex be repeated, and at most it can be repeated seven times. The rule is, however, that every male organism will in the following incarnation strive to become female, and conversely. All repugnance is of no avail, for it is not a question of our wishes in the physical world, but

rather of our inclinations during the period between death and a new birth, and these are determined by much wiser reasons than a possible horror conceived during a male incarnation of reincarnating as woman. From this it is clear that our later life is karmically determined by the earlier, and also that the deeds of a later life may be thus ordered.

It is important that we should learn to understand that yet another karmic connection will be essential if we are to throw light upon the important discussions of the next few days.

Let us, therefore, look back upon a remote epoch of human evolution when human incarnations began upon earth. This was in the ancient Lemurian period. It was then that the luciferic influence first acted effectively upon man, and that this then evoked the ahrimanic influence. Let us try to set before our souls how this luciferic influence acted externally in human life. The fact that man reached the stage in those ancient times in which he could absorb this luciferic influence, and also permeate his astral body with the luciferic influence, had the effect that his astral body was inclined to penetrate far more deeply into the organism, into the material part of the physical body, and to do so in quite a different way. Through the

luciferic influence man became more material. Had this influence not been active, the human tendency to descend into the material world would have been far weaker, and man would have remained in higher spheres of existence. Thus there came about a far stronger penetration of external and internal man, than would have been possible without the luciferic influence. This penetration was the first cause of our failure to remember the events preceding our incarnation. The birth through which we entered existence was of such a nature that we became closely united with matter, thereby effacing all memory of earlier experiences. Otherwise we should have retained the memory of our spiritual experiences before birth. Through the luciferic influence we were robbed of our memory of the preceding experiences and for this reason, we are forced during our lifetime to depend upon the external world for knowledge and experiences.

It would be a grave error to believe that only the coarser substances which we absorb act upon us. Not only do victuals and nutritious forces act upon us, but also other experiences, which flow into us by way of our senses. But through coarser union with matter, victuals affect us in a different way. Suppose that there had been no luciferic influence; then everything,

from victuals to the sense impressions, would have a far more refined influence upon us. Everything experienced by us as our relation to the outer world, would be permeated with what we experienced between death and a new birth. Because we have condensed matter, we are inclined to absorb what is denser.

Thus the luciferic influence is taking effect in such a way that through the condensation of matter, we also attract towards us out of the external world denser matter than we should otherwise have done and the effects are far different. The less dense substances would have retained a memory of our earlier life, and would also have given us the certitude that all our experiences between birth and death will bear results for time without end. We should know that although there may be death, yet everything happening continues in its effect. Because man had to absorb dense substances, he creates from birth onward a strong reciprocal activity between his own bodily nature and the external world.

What results from this reciprocity? The spiritual world is eclipsed at birth. Before man can again live in the spiritual world, his earlier condition must be restored to him. Everything of dense matter entering

us from outside, will be taken from us. Because we have acquired a denser materiality, we are forced, in order to re-enter the spiritual world, to await that period where the external material body will be taken from us. Denser matter penetrating us, from our birth onward, gradually destroys our human body. That which flows in destroys the body more and more, until it has been completely destroyed, so that it can no longer exist. From the moment of our birth, due to the luciferic influence, we absorb a denser materiality and we slowly destroy our body until, at the moment of death, it has become altogether useless.

From this we conclude that the luciferic influence is the karmic cause of man’s death. If birth had not this character then death too would not be for man what it is. We should, but for the luciferic influence approach death with an assured prospect of what lies before us. Death is the karmic effect of birth, and birth and death are karmically connected. Without birth, as experienced by us today, death as we experience it would not exist.

I have said before, that we cannot speak of karma for animals in the same sense as for human beings. Were someone to say that in the case of animals also, birth and death are karmically connected, such a

person would be ignorant of the fact that the birth and death of a human being is entirely different from that of an animal. That which outwardly appears identical, differs inwardly. It is the inner experience and not the physical event which is significant in birth and death. In the case of an animal, only the generic or group soul has experiences. For the group soul the death of an animal resembles somewhat our experience at the approach of summer, when we have our hair cut shorter, which will then slowly grow again. The group soul of a species feels the death of an animal like the death of a limb which will gradually be replaced. Thus we may compare the generic soul to the human Ego. It knows neither birth nor death; it is continually aware of what takes place before birth, and it sees continually what follows death. To speak of an animal's birth and death in the same way as we speak of man's would be absurd, because they are preceded by quite different causes. And it would be a denial of the activity of the spirit, if we believed that what appears identical externally is due to identical inner causes. Identity of external events never points with certainty to identical causes.

If we would consider a little how outward appearances may be identical whilst inner experiences are not so in the least, we could arrive in

a methodical and logical way at the conclusion that this is so. Suppose, for instance, we arrived at a certain place at 9 o’clock, and there saw two people standing together. Later, we arrived at the same spot, and these two people were again standing in the same place. Now we might conclude: ‘A’ is still standing in the same place: ‘B’ is still standing in the same place where he stood at 9 o’clock. If we enquire, however, into what these two people have done meanwhile, we may perhaps find that the one has been standing there all the time while the other has walked a long distance, and has become tired. We are here dealing with entirely different events. And just as it would be foolish to say, if two people at a later hour are again standing at the same spot, that they must have had identical experiences, it would be equally foolish when we find two cells of the same shape to conclude from their structure an identity of their inner function. It is necessary to know the whole connection of the facts that have brought the one cell to the place in question.

That is why the modern cellular physiology which sets out from an examination of the inner structure of the cells is taking the wrong course. Never can the external appearance prove the inner nature of a thing.

We must make reflections of this kind if we are to comprehend conclusions arrived at by occultists through occult observation — such as the difference between birth and death in the case of man and animals or birds. The study of these matters will be possible only when we occupy ourselves with what spiritual investigation has to tell us. As long as this is not generally done, external science, which adheres to external appearances and external facts, brings to light very beautiful facts, but all the opinions people can form upon suppositions concerning such facts will never be decisive for reality. That is why all our modern theoretical science is a creation of fantasy which has come about through combinations of external facts, having regard only to their outward appearance. In many departments external facts actually impel us towards a true interpretation, but modern opinion stands in the way.

Today we have allowed two neutral domains of karmic law to act upon us, and we shall see that they will be the foundation of our further discussions. We have realised that woman’s organism is the karmic result of man’s experiences, and man’s organism the karmic result of woman’s experiences; and we also have realised that death is the karmic result of birth in human life. If we try gradually to understand this, it

may lead us to penetrate more profoundly into the karmic connections of human life.

10. Free Will and Karma in the Future of Human Evolution

THERE are certain deeper questions of karmic connection concerning more especially our human influence upon karma, particularly upon that of other people, and concerning also the changing of the direction of karma, be it to a greater or less extent. Such questions as these one can neither answer nor even give an idea of how they ought to be answered, without touching, as we shall today, upon certain important secrets of our world existence. They may perhaps arise out of what has been said, if we follow up what has been broached and had light thrown upon it from one side or another.

We may ask what happens in a person’s karma when by reason of his previous acts or experiences there has arisen a necessity for illness to compensate for these acts and experiences, and this person is really healed through human assistance by means of remedies or other intervention. What does this signify and in what way is such a fact related to a deeper conception of karmic law?

Now I will begin by saying that in order to throw any important light at all upon this question, things must be touched upon which are far removed from the science and the present thought of today and which may, so to say, only be spoken of amongst Anthroposophists who, having absorbed some of the truths relating to the deeper foundations of existence, have already prepared themselves for such things, and have acquired a perception of how things which today can only be indicated, may nevertheless be fully proved. I should like, however, to take this opportunity of asking one thing of you. I am today compelled to talk about the deeper foundations of the earth's existence which I shall endeavour to express as precisely as possible. But this would be wrong if it were used in another connection or spoken of without any connection at all, and would lead to one misunderstanding after another. I ask you for the present just to accept it only, and make no other use of it. I must also make a point, regarding these things, that they should not be handed on; that no one should consider them as a teaching which may in any way spread further; for only the connection justifies such a statement, and such a statement is justifiable only when it is backed by the consciousness that can coin suitable words to express thoughts of this kind.

We are now speaking, on the one hand, of the deeper nature of material existence, and on the other, of the nature of soul existence. We must today acquire a deeper comprehension of what pertains to the soul and to the material world. This is, indeed, necessary for a quite definite reason — for the reason given in the previous lectures when we said that the soul of man can penetrate more or less deeply into matter. We described yesterday the nature of the male by saying that in a man the soul penetrates deeper into matter, while in the female the soul holds back in a certain way and is more independent of matter. We saw that much of karmic experience depends upon how the penetration of the soul into matter takes place. We saw also how certain illnesses in one incarnation appear as the karmic consequences of errors made by the soul in former incarnations when it worked at its deeds, experiences and impulses. Then on the way between death and a new birth the soul acquired the tendency to transform into matter that which was formerly only a characteristic, a mere influence in the soul; so it now permeates the body. Because the human being is then permeated by a soul which has also absorbed either the luciferic or ahrimanic influence, the human substance will in consequence be damaged. Here is to be found the cause of illness, and we may therefore say: In a sick body there dwells

a damaged soul which has come under a wrong influence — a luciferic or ahrimanic influence; and the moment we are able to remove these influences from the soul, the normal relationship of soul and the body should come about, and health should be re-established. What then is the relation between these two members of the earthly human existence of which we are now speaking, matter and soul? What are they in their deeper nature?

The man of the present day is generally of the opinion that the answer to the question, ‘Of what does matter consist? What is the soul?’ — if it could be given at all — must prove to be the same all over the world. I do not think it would be easy for him to understand that for the beings who lived upon the old Moon, the answer to these questions must be quite different from those of beings who live upon the Earth. For existence is so much in the throes of evolution, that even the ideas may alter which a being may have about the deeper foundations of his own nature; so that the answer to this question, ‘What is matter, what is the soul?’ must also vary. It must at once be emphasised that the answers which will be given are only those which the earth-man can make, and are of significance only to the earth-man.

A person will at first judge ‘matter’ according to what confronts him in the external world in the shape of different beings and things, and everything which makes an impression upon him in any way. Then he discovers that there are different sorts of matter. But I need not go very far into that, for you may find in all the ordinary books those expositions which could be given here if we had time enough. These differences in matter present themselves to man when he sees the different metals, gold, copper, lead, and so on, or when he sees anything that does not belong to this category. You know, too, that chemistry traces these different materials back to certain fundamental substances of matter, called ‘elements.’ These elements, even in the nineteenth century, were still considered to be substances possessing certain properties which did not admit of being further divided. But in the case of a substance such as water, we are able to separate it into hydrogen and oxygen, yet in hydrogen and oxygen themselves we have substances which, according to the chemistry of the nineteenth century, were incapable of being further divided. One could distinguish about seventy such elements. You will doubtless also know that owing to phenomena which have been produced in connection with a few special elements — radium, for instance — and also owing to various phenomena produced in the

study of electricity, the idea of the elements has been shaken in many ways. One has come to the conclusion that the seventy elements were only temporary limitations of matter, and that one could trace back the possibility of subdivision to a fundamental substance, which then through inner combinations, through the nature of its inner elementary being, manifests at one time as gold, at another time as potash, lime, and so on.

These scientific theories vary; and just as the scientific theories changed in ‘each fifty years’ of the nineteenth century, so it came about that certain physicists saw in matter certain entities which are charged with electricity; just as the ionic theory is now in fashion — for there are fashions in science — in the same way at no distant future other scientific methods will exist, and our idea of the constitution of matter will be quite different. These are facts. Scientific opinions are changeable, and must be changeable, for they depend altogether upon those facts which are of significance for one particular epoch. The teachings of Spiritual Science on the other hand continue through all ages — as long as there are civilisations on the earth — and will continue as long as these civilisations exist. It has always had the same comprehensive view regarding the nature of material existence and matter;

and in order to lead you on to what Spiritual Science looks upon as the essential part of matter and of substance, I should like to say the following:

You all know that ice is a solid body — not through its own nature, but through external circumstances. It at once ceases to be a solid if we raise the temperature sufficiently; it then becomes a fluid substance. Therefore it does not depend upon what is in a substance itself as to what form it takes in the external world, but upon the entire conditions of the universe surrounding it. We can then further bring heat to this substance, and out of the water we can, after a certain point, produce steam. We have ice, water, steam, and through the raising of the temperature we have caused what we may describe as ‘the appearance of matter in manifold forms.’ Thus we have to distinguish in matter that the appearance it presents to us does not come out of an inner constitution, but that the manner in which it confronts us depends upon the general constitution of the universe, and that one must not isolate any part of the whole universe into individual substances. Now the methods of modern science cannot reach where Spiritual Science is able to reach. The science of today can never, by means of the methods at its disposal, bring the substance of ice — which, when the

temperature is increased, is first made fluidic and then turned into steam — into the final condition attainable on earth, into which every substance can be transmuted. It is not possible today, by scientific means, to bring about conditions which show that ‘if you take gold and rarefy it as far as it can be rarefied upon the earth, you will bring it at last to a state which could equally be reached by silver or by copper.’ Spiritual Science can do this because it is based upon the methods of spiritual research; is thus able to observe how, in the spaces between substances, there is always a uniform substance everywhere which represents the extreme limit to which all matter is reducible. Spiritual research discovers a condition of dissolution in which all materials are reduced to a common basis, but what then appears there is no longer matter, but something which lies beyond all the specialised forms of matter around us. Every single substance, be it gold, silver, or any other substance, is there seen to be a condensation of this fundamental substance, which is really no longer matter. There is a fundamental essence of our material earth existence out of which all matter only comes into being by a condensing process, and to the question: What is this fundamental substance of our earth existence, Spiritual Science gives the answer: ‘*Every substance upon the earth is condensed light.’* There is nothing in

material existence in any form whatever which is anything but condensed light. Hence you see that to those who know the facts, there can be no necessity for such a theory as that of the ‘vibration hypothesis’ of the nineteenth century. Therein one sought to find light by methods which themselves are coarser than the light itself. Light cannot be traced back to anything else in our material existence. Wherever you reach out and touch a substance, there you have condensed, compressed light. All matter is, in its essence, light.

We have thus indicated one side of the question from the point of view of Spiritual Science. We have seen that light is the foundation of all material existence. If we look at the material human body, that also, inasmuch as it consists of matter, is nothing but a substance woven out of light. Inasmuch as man is a material being, he is composed of light.

Let us now consider the other question: ‘Of what does the soul consist?’ If we were to make research in the same way, by means of the methods of Spiritual Science, into the substance, into the really fundamental essence of the soul, then it would appear that just as all matter is compressed light, so all the different phenomena of the soul upon earth are

modifications, are manifold transformations of that which must be called, if we truly realise the fundamental meaning of the word: love. Every stirring of the soul, wherever it appears, is in some way a modification of love, and if the inner and the outer are, as it were, intermingled, impressed into one another in man, we find also that his outer bodily part is woven out of light, and his inner soul is woven spiritually out of love. Love and light are, indeed, in some way interwoven in all the phenomena of our earth existence, and anyone who wishes to understand things as explained by Spiritual Science, will first of all ask: To what extent are love and light interwoven?

Love and light are the two elements, the two component parts of all earthly existence: love as the soul part, and light as the outer material part.

Now, however, another fact comes in. For both these elements, light and love, which would otherwise be side by side throughout the great course of the world existence, there must be found an intermediary, weaving the one element into the other — light into love. This must needs be a power which has no particular interest in love, which thus weaves light into the element of love — a power which is interested only in causing the light to be spread abroad to as

great an extent as possible, and therefore causes light to stream into the element of love. Such a power cannot be terrestrial for the earth is the *Cosmos of Love*; and its mission is to weave love in everywhere. Anything, therefore, which is bound up with the earth existence can have no interest which is not to some degree influenced by love.

It is the luciferic beings which act here — for they remained behind upon the Moon upon the *Cosmos of Wisdom.* They are particularly interested in weaving light into love. The luciferic beings are everywhere at work when our inner part which is actually woven out of love comes into any sort of connection with light, in whatsoever form it may be found; and we are confronted with light in all material existence. Wheresoever we come into connection with light, the luciferic beings enter, and the luciferic influence becomes woven into love. In that way man first, in the course of his incarnations, entered the luciferic element. Lucifer has woven himself into the element of love; and all that is formed from love has the impress of Lucifer, which alone can bring us what causes love to be not merely a self-abandonment, but permeates it in its innermost being with wisdom. Otherwise, without this wisdom, love would be an impersonal force in man for which he could not be responsible.

But in this way love becomes the essential force of the Ego where that luciferic element is woven, which otherwise is only to be found outside in matter. Thus it becomes possible for our inner being which, during earth existence, should receive the attribute of love in its fullness, to be permeated besides by everything that may be described as an activity of Lucifer, and from this side leads to a penetration of external matter; so that which is woven out of light is not interwoven with love alone, but with love that is permeated by Lucifer. When man takes up the luciferic — element, he interweaves into the material part of his own body a soul which is, it is true, woven out of love, but into which the luciferic element is interwoven. It is that love which is permeated with the luciferic element, which impregnates matter and is the cause of illness working out from within. In connection with what we have already mentioned as being a necessary consequence of an illness proceeding from a luciferic element, we may say that the ensuing pain, which we have seen is a consequence of the Luciferic element, shows us the effect of the working of the karmic law. So the consequences of an act or a temptation coming from Lucifer are experienced karmically and the pain itself indicates what should lead to the overcoming of the consequences in question.

Now ought we to help in such a case or not? Ought we in any way to cancel what has pressed in from the luciferic element with all its consequences working out in pain?

Remembering the answer to our question as to the nature of the soul, it follows of necessity that we have the right to do this only if we find the means, in the case of a man who has the luciferic element in him which caused his illness, to expel that luciferic element in the right way. What is the remedy which exerts a stronger action, so that the luciferic element is driven out. What is it which has been defiled by the luciferic element on our earth? It is love! Hence only by means of love can we give real help for karma to work out in the right way. Finally we must see in that element of love which has been psychically influenced by Lucifer resulting in illness, a force which must be affected by another force. We must pour in love. All those acts of healing dependent upon what we may call a ‘psychic healing process’ must have the characteristic that love is part of the process. In some form or other all psychic healing depends on a stream of love, which we pour into another person as a balsam. All that is done in this domain must finally be traced back to love; and this can be done. Even if we set simple psychic factors in action; if we assist

another, perhaps, only to overcome depression, this can be traced back to love. All arises from the impulse of love, from simpler processes of healing, to that which is often, in amateur fashion called ‘magnetic healing.’ What does the healer communicate to the one to be healed? It is, to use an expression of physics, an ‘interchange of tensions.’ Certain processes in the etheric body of the healer create with the person to be healed a sort of polarity. Polarity arises just as it would arise in an abstract sense, when one kind of electricity, say positive, is produced and then the corresponding electricity — the negative — appears. Thus polarities are created, and this act must be conceived as emanating from sacrifice. One evokes in oneself a process which is not intended to be significant to oneself only, for then one would call forth one process only; in this case, however, the process is intended in addition to induce a polarity in another person, and this polarity, which naturally depends upon a contact between the healer and the person to be healed, is, in the fullest sense of the word, the sacrifice of a force which is no other than the transmuted action of love. That is what is really active in these psychic healings — a transmuted power of love. We must clearly understand that without this fundamental love-force the healing will not lead to the right goal. But these processes of love need not

always run their course [so] that the person is fully aware of them with his ordinary day-consciousness; they run their course also in the region of the subconscious. In that which is considered as the technique of the healing process, even to the way in which the movements of the hands are made, and technically reduced to a system, we have the reflection of a sacrificial act. Therefore even where we do not see the direct connection in a process of healing, when we do not see what is being done, we have, nevertheless, before us an act of love, although the action may be completely transformed to a mere technique.

Since the soul consists fundamentally of love, we can assist with psychic factors. And these processes apparently lie very near the periphery of human nature, and by such factors of healing that which in its essence consists of love is enriched by what it requires in the way of love. Thus on the one side we see how we can help, so that, after being caught in the toils of Lucifer, the sufferer is able to free himself again. Because love is the fundamental essence of the soul, we may, indeed, influence the direction of karma.

On the other hand, we may ask, what has become of the substance woven from light in which the soul

dwells?

Take the body — the outer man in his material part. If through a karmic process there had not been imprinted from out of the soul into matter a love substance such as is permeated by Lucifer or Ahriman; if a pure love substance only had poured in, it would not have been impurifying, or damaging to the substance woven out of light. If love alone were to flow into matter, it would then so flow into the human body that the latter could not be damaged. It is only because a love which has absorbed luciferic or ahrimanic forces can penetrate that the substance woven out of light becomes less perfect than it was originally intended to be. Therefore it is only through pouring into man of the luciferic or ahrimanic influences during his consecutive incarnations, that the human organisation is not what it might be. If it were as it ought to be, it would manifest healthy human substance; but because it has absorbed the activities of Lucifer and Ahriman, sickness and disease result.

How can we draw from outside those influences which have flowed in from an imperfect soul, that is, from a wrong love substance? What happens to the body by this influx of something which is faulty?

According to Spiritual Science something happens which turns light in some way into its opposite. Light has its opposite in darkness or obscurity. Everything really presenting itself — strange as it may sound — as the defilement of that which is woven out of light, is a darkness woven out of a luciferic or ahrimanic influence. Thus we see darkness woven into the human substance. But this darkness was only thus interwoven because the human body has become the bearer of the Ego that lives on through the incarnations. This was formerly not there. Only a *human* body can be subject to this corruption, for such a corruption was formerly not contained in that which was woven out of light.

Man today draws the base of his material life out of what he has gradually rejected in the course of evolution — that is, the animal kingdom, the vegetable kingdom, and the mineral kingdom. These also contain the different substances woven out of light for earth existence. But in none of these substances are there any of the influences which, in the course of human karma have acted on the organism through the soul. In the three kingdoms around us, therefore, man cannot through his luciferic or ahrimanic influence, as emanating from his love forces, have a defiling effect. Nothing of him is here.

And what in man has been defiled is spread around him in all its purity. Let us consider a mineral substance, a salt or any other substance which man has also within him, or might have within him. But in him it is interwoven with the love substance defiled by Lucifer or Ahriman. Outside, however, it is pure. Thus every substance outside is distinguished from that which man bears within him. Externally it is always different from what it is in man, because in him it is interwoven with the ahrimanic or luciferic influence. That is the reason why, for everything of external substance which can be more or less defiled by man, there must be something which can be found externally representing the same thing in its pure condition. *That which exists in the world in its purity, is the external cure for the corresponding substance in its damaged state.* If you apply this in the right way to the human being, you then have the specific for the corresponding injury.

Thus we find in quite an objective way, what may be applied to the human body as a remedy. Here is the injury characterised as a form of darkness — and that which is not yet dark as the outer woven pure light; and we see why we are able to remove the darkness to be found in man if we bring pure substance woven from light to bear upon him. Thus we have a specific

remedy for the injury. Now attention has often been drawn to the fact that Anthroposophists in particular should not fall into the narrow-minded error of denying that in such cases there really is a specific remedy against this or that injury, or which beneficially affects this or the other organ. It has often been said that the organism has within it the forces with which to help itself. Even although the Vienna School of Nihilistic Therapeutics may be right in its assertion that by calling up the opposing forces we can bring about a cure, we may nevertheless help on the cure by specific remedies. Here we see a parallel which one may describe from Spiritual Science.

From what I have said about diphtheria, for instance, you may gather that the karmic causes have in this case particularly affected the astral body. Now closely related to the astral body is the animal kingdom You will always find in those forms of illness closer connected with the astral body, that medical science, unconsciously driven by a dim impulse, seeks for remedies from the animal kingdom. For such illnesses whose causes lie in the etheric body, science seeks for remedies out of the vegetable kingdom. An interesting lecture might be given about the relation of the purple foxglove to certain illnesses of the heart. These are things which, inasmuch as they are based on truth,

are not right for five years only — as one doctor states — and then begin to be wrong — as in the case when only external symptoms are taken into consideration. But there is a certain treasure of remedies which can always in some way be traced back to some connection with Spiritual Science, which have been inherited without any knowledge whence they came. Just as today the astronomers do not know that the theory of Kant and Laplace came from the mystery schools of the Middle Ages, so people do not know whence came these real valuable remedies. Causes of illness, which are connected with the nature of the physical body, lead to the use of remedies from the mineral kingdom.

A simple consideration of these analogous views will provide a fingerpost for these matters. Through his connection with the surrounding world, man can be helped from two different sides: on the one hand bringing him transmuted love from the psychic method of healing and on the other hand by bringing him transmuted light in various ways by those processes which are connected with external methods of healing. Everything which can be done is brought about either by inner psychic means — by love — or by the external means of densified light. When one day science has advanced so far as to learn to believe

in the super-sensible and in the saying: ‘Matter is a form of condensed light,’ then a spiritual light will be thrown by these words upon the systematic research on external remedies. Hence we see that what during long ages, from the mystery schools of old Egypt and old Greece, was gradually added to the treasure of healing is not mere nonsense, but that in all these things there is a sound kernel. Anthroposophy does not exist in order to attack a certain school of medicine, and to say, ‘There they give people poisons!’ The word poison today works as a suggestion, and people do not reflect how relative this word is. For what is ‘poison’? Every substance may be a poison. It is only a question of the methods of healing and of how much is taken at a time. Water is a strong poison, if one takes ten bucketfuls at one time. The results of this, considered chemically, are not very different from what they would be if one gave a person any other substance. It depends always upon the quantity, for all these ideas are relative.

From what we have gone into today, we can be glad that for every injury we can do to injure our body, there is to be found in surrounding nature, which now appears to us as the world, that which will make it whole again. It is also a beautiful relationship that we have for the external world, and we may rejoice not

only because we see the beautiful flowers and the mountains glowing in the sunlight, but also because our surroundings are so intimately connected with what is in man himself, good or bad. We can rejoice in nature, not only for what appeals at first sight, but the deeper we go into what has condensed into external material existence, the more we shall find that this nature which causes us to rejoice has within it at the same time the mighty healer for all the damage man can cause himself. Somewhere in nature the remedy is concealed. It is a question, not only of understanding the language of the healer, but also of obeying it and really carrying it out. Today it is in most cases impossible for us to hear the voice of healing nature because our misunderstanding of light, and the darkness which has penetrated into knowledge has in many respects brought about conditions preventing us from hearing. Therefore we must clearly understand that where in one case no help can properly be given, where, on account of karmic connections, some suffering may not properly be lessened, this does not mean that it absolutely could not be done.

Here again we see a remarkable connection which allows us to perceive the whole great world, inclusive of mankind, as *One Being.* In the sayings: *'Matter is woven light,'* and '*the soul is in some way or other*

diluted love,' are to be found the keys of innumerable secrets of earth existence. But these hold good only for the earth existence, and would not concern any other domain of the world existence. Thus we have shown nothing less than that we, if in any way we alter the direction of karma, unite ourselves in one or the other case with the elements composing our earth existence: on the one side with light which has become matter — and on the other side with love which has become soul. We either draw the remedies out of our surroundings, out of the condensed light, or out of our own soul by the healing loving act, the sacrificial act, and we then heal with the soul-forces obtained from love. We unite ourselves with what is most deeply justified upon the earth, when, on the one hand, we unite ourselves with light and on the other with love. All earth conditions are in some way conditions of balance between light and love and everything unhealthy is a disturbance of that balance. If the disturbance is in love, we can then help by unfolding the forces of love; and if the disturbance is in light, we can then help by somehow providing for ourselves, out of the universe, that light which is able to dissolve the darkness within us.

These are the fundamental ways of help, and we see again how everything depends upon the balance of

opposites. Light and love are polar opposites and on their being interwoven depend ultimately all the psychic and material processes of our life. Therefore in all the spheres of human life, evolution continues from epoch to epoch with the balance inclining first to one side and then swinging back to the other, so that evolution resembles the surging of waves. This motion of an unstable equilibrium throws light even on the most complex processes of civilisation. Take a period when certain *injuries* entered into the evolution of mankind because man contemplated only [the] inner and neglected the outer, for example, in the Middle Ages. It was then that through the blossoming of the mystical side, the external remained unheeded and errors occurred not only in knowledge but in action. Then followed the age that was repelled by mysticism, and was attracted by the outer world so as to make the pendulum swing to the opposite side.

Here is the transition from the Middle Ages to modern times and many such disturbances of the balance, manifest in different ways.

In this connection I should like to note that just in such times as our own, a characteristic in many people is that they completely forget, and pay no attention to, that which one may call ‘the consciousness of a

super-sensible world.’ They pay no attention whatever to the fact that there is a spiritual world, and they therefore turn away their thoughts from it. In such an age — or in all such ages — there is always in certain respects a counterpart to be found. I should like to show you this in a very simple manner.

When there are people upon the physical plane who are so absorbed in the physical that they completely forget the spiritual, then a contrary tendency appears among those souls who are living in the spiritual world between death and a new birth — a tendency which works over from the physical into the spiritual plane — impelling them to occupy themselves with the influences which act out of the spiritual world into the physical. It is this which brings about in the physical world the intervention by souls who are still in that state before birth. These souls work down into the physical world according to the means which offer and they are able to work indirectly through persons who are more sensitive to such influence from the spiritual world. In order to make this clearer, one must not accept everything that purports to be a revelation from a Spiritual world. We must distinguish the real characteristic cases in which the dead are anxious show in a palpable manner that there is indeed a spiritual world. Because there are so many people

completely in the dark, who have woven so much darkness into themselves that they wish to know nothing about the spiritual world, there are, on the other hand, among the dead many who have the impulse to work into the physical world. Such things generally occur when nothing is done deliberately to bring them about on the physical plane and they occur without special preparation.

You will find much proof of these things collected in the book by our friend, Ludwig Deinhard, *Das Mysterium des Menschen (The Mystery of Man).* Here much has been collected and systematised which is just what one needs, and which in the scientific literature of to-day is so scattered that it is impossible for everyone to gather it together. Therefore it is a good thing to have in this book a collection of these spiritual facts, which, as you now see, are eminently characteristic of one aspect of our age. You will find very aptly described in this book the characteristic fact of an investigator, who by materialistic methods had in his earth life endeavoured to give every possible proof of the spiritual world — I mean the late Frederick Myers — and who after his death was strongly impelled to show to mankind by means of radiations from the spiritual world and by the help of

the spiritual world, what he had endeavoured to do when here.

This is intended to illustrate how in the world and in world affairs we see continual disturbances of the balance, and then again the efforts for the restoring of the balance.

This continual disturbance and restoration of the balance between the two elements of light and love is fundamental for us; and in human karma, from incarnation to incarnation, both work to restore the disturbed condition. Karma, working its serpentine way through incarnations is just such a disturbed balance, until man, after all his incarnations, shall at last create the final balance which can be reached upon earth. Having fulfilled his mission on earth, he evolves then into a new planetary form.

I have endeavoured to set forth a few facts, without which a deeper establishment of karmic connections and laws would be impossible. I have not shrunk from touching to-day upon those mysteries for which our modern science will not for a long time be ripe: Matter is in reality woven light, and that which belongs to the soul is in some way or other refined love. These are ancient occult sayings, but they are sayings which will

for all time remain true and will prove fruitful for human evolution, not only for knowledge, but also for human work and action.

11. Individual and Human Karma. Karma of the Higher Beings

THERE is much still to be said about the various manifestations of karma; but as this is our last lecture, and time is necessarily short for so wide a subject, you easily understand that much that could be said, perhaps much of that which is in your minds in the way questions, cannot be dealt with this time. But our anthroposophical movement will continue, and that which in one course of lectures must necessarily remain unanswered, can on another occasion be carried on and explained further.

It will repeatedly have come before your minds that in the law of karma, man experiences something which is so organised that at every moment of our life we can look upon what we have gone through, upon what we have done, thought and felt in the incarnations preceding our own, and we shall always find that our momentary human inner and outer fate may be understood in the light of a ‘Life-account,’ in which on the side we set down all the clever, reasonable and wise experiences, and on the other all that is unreasonable, wicked or ugly. On one side or

the other there will be an excess which signifies at any moment of life the destiny of that moment.

Now various questions may arise in this connection, and the first one would be: How is that which human beings do as a society connected with what we call ‘Individual karma?’ We have already touched upon these questions from other aspects. If we look back at any event in history, back, for instance, to the Persian wars, it will be impossible for us to believe that these events — looked at in the first place from the Greek point of view — represent something only to be written in the book of fate of individual men, who upon the physical plane may appear to be the persons most directly interested. Think of all the leaders in the Persian wars, of all the men who sacrificed themselves at that time, of all that was done by individuals — from the leaders down to the separate individuals — in the Greek legions at that time. If we really consider such an event in a reasonable light, could we possibly ascribe what each separate person did at that time solely to the karmic account of that individual? We should find it impossible so to do. For could we imagine that in the events which happen to a whole nation or to a great part of civilised humanity, nothing further occurs than that each separate human individual simply lives out his own karma? This is not

possible. We must in the course of historical evolution always proceed from one event to the next, and we shall see that in the evolution of mankind itself both meaning and significance are to be found, but that such events cannot be identical with the particular karma of separate individuals.

We may reflect on an occurrence such as that of the Persian wars, and ask what significance they had in the course of human evolution. In the East a certain brilliant civilisation had developed. But as every light has its shadow, so must we clearly see that this Eastern civilisation was only to be attained by humanity at the cost of certain darker shadowy elements which should have had no place in human evolution. This civilisation had one pronounced shadow-side — the impulse to extend its frontiers by means of physical force. If this desire for aggrandisement had not been there, it is evident that the whole of that Eastern civilisation would not have come into being. The one cannot be thought of without the other. In order that man might evolve further, the Greek civilisation, for instance, had to develop from quite different principles. But the Greek civilisation could not of itself make a direct beginning. It had to obtain certain elements from outside and it borrowed these from the Eastern civilisation. Various

legends about heroes who from Greece passed over to the East, do in fact represent how the pupils of certain Greek schools went over to the East and brought back to the Greeks those treasures of Eastern culture which could then be transformed by means of the national Greek talent. But for this it was necessary to eradicate the shadow-side of this culture — the impulse to press forward to the West by means of purely external force. The Roman civilisation which succeeded the Greek, and all that contributed to the evolution of European mankind would not have been possible if the Greeks had not prepared the ground by a further development of the Eastern civilisation — if they had not beaten back the Persians and what pertained to them. Thus that which had been created in Asia was purified by the driving back of the Asiatics.

Many events in the evolution of the world can be considered in this way, and one then obtains a striking picture. If we gave a course of lectures extending over three or four years and during that time gave our thought only to the traditional, historical documents of humanity, we should then see the unfolding of something which we might really call a plan in the evolution of mankind. We could then survey such a plan and say to ourselves, ‘this had to be attained; it had this shadow-side which later had to be cast off;

the treasures which had been acquired had to pass over to another, and there be perfected further.’

After the Greeks had carried on the acquired treasures for some little while, the downfall of Greece occurred, and Rome took her place. In this way we should arrive at a plan of human evolution, so that when speaking of this plan we could never fall into the error of saying: ‘How did it come about, for instance, that just Xerxes or Miltiades or Leonidas had this or that individual karma?’ We must consider this individual karma as something which must be determined by and interwoven with the plan of the evolution of mankind. This cannot be understood in any other way; and this, too, is the view of Spiritual Science. But if this is the case, we must say: In this well-planned advance of human evolution we must see something which is a thing by itself, which is continuous in itself, in a similar way to that in which karmic events in individual human lives are connected with each other, and we must further enquire: ‘What relation does such a plan of the whole evolution of mankind bear to the individual karma of man?’ Let us first of all consider what one might call the ‘destiny’ of human evolution itself.

When we look back we see how one civilisation after another arises, and how the evolution of one people follows upon that of another. We see further how one nation after another acquires this or that which is new, how something remains out of the separate national civilisations which is permanent but how just on that account the nations must die out, so that the treasures each separate nation has acquired may be saved for the corresponding later epochs of human evolution. We must, therefore, find quite comprehensible what Spiritual Science has to say, that in the continuous advance of human evolution one can in the first place clearly distinguish two currents. Consider how in the whole course of the evolution of mankind there is what we may look upon as a ‘continuous current,’ within which wave after wave develops, and that which the foregoing wave has acquired is carried over into the next. We can get an idea of this if we look back to the first civilisation of the Post-Atlantean age, and observe the great achievements of ancient India. But if we compare that with the feeble echo of it which is contained in the old Vedas, which are, to be sure, wonderful enough, but which are but a faint reflection of that to which the Rishis attained and of what Spiritual Science relates to us of the great culture of the Indians, we then are compelled to admit that the original greatness of what this people accomplished

for mankind had already faded when a beginning was made to preserve this treasure of human culture in those beautiful poetical productions. But that which the Indian culture first gained flowed over into the general course of human evolution and this alone made it possible for that to develop later which again was required by a young people, not by a people already grown old. The Indians had first to be driven back to the southern Peninsula, and then the Zarathustran view of the world evolved in Persia. How sublime was this view of the world when it arose, and how low had it fallen in a comparatively short time in the people who had received it! In Egypt and Chaldea we see the same thing happen. Then we see the passing over of the Eastern wisdom into Greece, and we see the Greeks beat back that which is Eastern on the external physical plane. We then see all that the whole East had acquired taken up into the lap of Greece and interwoven with much that had been acquired in various domains of Europe. Out of this there was created a new culture, which then in various indirect ways became capable of receiving the Christ Impulse and of transplanting it into the West.

We find this continuous stream of civilisation in which we see wave after wave, and each successive wave is both a continuation of the preceding and a

new contribution to mankind. But what was the origin of all this? Remember all that each nation experiences in its own culture. Think of the accumulation of emotion and perceptions in countless individuals, of wishes and enthusiasms fostering the impulse of this culture. Think how the individuals were united in the one cultural impulse, so that through countless centuries of human development, one nation after another, developing the successive cultural impulses, each one lived its enthusiasms; but lived too in a sort of illusion. Every one of them believed the particular achievement of that culture to be not transitory but eternal. For that reason only was the devoted work of the separate peoples made possible, because the illusion always survived. Even today the illusion exists; although we are not so absolutely bound by it and do not speak of our culture as necessarily everlasting.

There you have two things necessary to national civilisations, and which are only beginning to change in our own day. For the first domain of human spiritual life in which such illusions cannot persist, is that of Anthroposophy. It would be a grave error for an Anthroposophist to believe that the forms in which our knowledge is now clothed and the train of thought which we are able to give out today from our

Anthroposophical thought, feeling and will, are eternal. It would be very short-sighted to suppose that in three thousand years there would still be persons who would speak of the Anthroposophical truths just as we ourselves do today. We know that we are compelled on account of the conditions of our time to impress something of the continuous stream of evolution into present forms of thought and that our successors will express their experiences of these things in completely different forms. Why is this so? Throughout many centuries and many thousands of years of human culture, civilisation imposed on single individuals experiences through which a contribution was made to the collective evolution of the nations. Think of the numberless experiences which were gone through in ancient Greece, and think of what issued from that later as an extract for the whole of humanity! You will then say: There is more in this than merely the individual currents. Many things occur for the sake of this primary current.

So we must observe two things: first, something which must spring up and die away, in order that from its entirety a second thing, which reckoned by quantity is the smallest part, may survive as something lasting. When we realise that in the evolution of mankind since there has been human

individual karma, two powers or beings are at work whom we have always found to be active — Lucifer and Ahriman — then only shall we understand the progress of human evolution. For the aim of this evolution is that finally, when the earth shall have attained its goal, those experiences which were gradually embodied in the whole human evolution out of the different civilisations, will bear fruit for every separate individual, quite regardless of what particular destiny he may have had. But we can see this goal only if we look at the evolution of the world in the light of Anthroposophy. For let no man deceive himself. To think of such a goal in the right way, with the full strength of the human individuality, without the merging of the individuality into some nebulous pantheistic unity, but in such a way that the individuality is completely maintained, so that into it flows that which mankind has as a whole acquired — this goal can only be clearly and definitely seen when the soul develops by means of Anthroposophy.

If we glance back at the earlier civilisations, we see that ever since human individualities have incarnated, Lucifer and Ahriman have had a share in the evolution of humanity. Lucifer on his side always seeks to take part in the progressive stream of civilisation by settling down into the human astral bodies, and

impregnating them with the Lucifer impulse. Lucifer carries on his existence during the course of the evolution of mankind by working in upon the human astral bodies. Man could never acquire what Lucifer gives him, solely from those powers which bring about the continuous stream of civilisation just described. If you separate this stream of civilisation from the whole progressive course of mankind, then you have as ever increasing wealth that which the normally progressing Spiritual Beings of the Hierarchies cause to be poured down into humanity. We must look up to the Hierarchies and say: Those who go through their normal evolution furnish the earth-civilisation with that which is the lasting possession of humanity, which was, it is true, transformed later, but has nevertheless become a lasting possession. It is just like a tree and the pith within it. And so we obtain a continuous living stream in the progressing civilisations.

Through these powers who are going through a normal evolution on their own account, man would have led his Ego more and more with this progressing enrichment of human evolution. From time to time there would have flowed in that which brings man on further. Man would have filled himself more and more with the gifts of the spiritual world, and at last, when

the earth had reached its goal, it stands to reason that man would have possessed within himself everything which was given from the spiritual worlds. But then one thing would not have been possible. Man would not have been able to develop the original, sacred ardour, devotion and enthusiasm arising in one age of civilisation after another. Out of the same soil from which springs every wish and every desire, springs forth also the wish for great ideals, the desire for the happiness of mankind, for the accomplishments of Art in the successive periods of human civilisation. From the same soil whence spring injurious desires leading to evil, springs forth also the striving after the highest which can be accomplished upon earth. And that which enkindles the human soul for the highest good, would not exist if, on the other hand, the same desire might not sink into wickedness and vice. The possibility of this in human evolution is the work of the luciferic spirits. We must not fail to recognise that the luciferic spirits have brought freedom to mankind at the same time as the possibility of evil — free receptivity for that which otherwise would only flow into the human soul.

But we have seen on other occasions, that everything provoked by Lucifer finds its counterpart in Ahriman. We see Lucifer and all his hosts work in that

which gave to human evolution the impulse of the Greek civilisation, in the Greek heroes, in the great men and artists of Greece. He penetrates into the astral bodies and enkindles enthusiasm within them for that which they honour as the highest. So that what was to flow into evolution through Greece became at the same time an enthusiasm in the soul of the people. This is precisely Lucifer’s realm, because Lucifer owes his power to the Moon-evolution and not the Earth-evolution. He is a challenge to Ahriman, and as Lucifer develops his activity from one age to another, Ahriman joins in and, bit by bit, spoils that which Lucifer has brought about on earth. The evolution of man is a continual action and reaction between Ahriman and Lucifer. If Lucifer were not in humanity, the zeal and fire for the continuous progress of human development would be lacking; if Ahriman were not there, he who in nation after nation destroys again that which comes, — not from the continuous stream, but from the luciferic impulse — then Lucifer would want to perpetuate each civilisation. Here you see Lucifer drawing down his own karma upon himself. This is a necessary consequence of his evolution on the old Moon. And the consequence now is, that he must always chain Ahriman to his heels: Ahriman is the karmic fulfilment of Lucifer.

Thus in the example of the ahrimanic and luciferic beings we get an insight into the karma of the higher beings. There also karma reigns. Karma is everywhere where there are egos. Lucifer and Ahriman naturally have egos and therefore the effects of their deeds can react upon themselves. Many of those secrets will be touched upon in the summer, in the series of lectures on ‘Secrets of the Bible Story of Creation,’ but there is just one thing to which I should now like to draw your attention, showing you the profound importance of each single word in the true occult records.

Have you never thought why it is that in the Bible History of the Creation, at the end of each day of creation comes the sentence: ‘And the Elohim saw the work, and they saw that it was very good!’ That is a significant statement. Why is it there? The sentence itself shows that it refers to a characteristic of the Elohim who evolved in a normal way on the old Moon and whose opponent is Lucifer. It is given as a sort of characteristic belonging to the Elohim that after each day of creation they saw that ‘it was very good.’ It is given for the reason that this was the degree of attainment reached by the Elohim. They could on the Moon only see their work as long as they were performing it, they could not have a subsequent consciousness of it. That they were able subsequently

to look back reflectively upon their work, marks a particular stage in the consciousness of the Elohim. This only became possible upon the earth, and their inner character is shown by the fact that the element of will streams out from the being of the Elohim, so that when they saw it they saw that it was very good. Those were the Elohim who had completed their work upon the Moon and who, when they looked at it afterwards on the earth, were able to say: ‘It can remain, it is very good.’ But for that it was necessary that the Moon-evolution should be completed.

Now what of the Lucifer beings, who had not completed their Moon-development? They must also try to look back upon their work when on earth, for instance, to their share in the ardour and enthusiasm of the Greek civilisation. They will then see how, little by little, Ahriman crumbled it away; and they will have to say, because they did not complete it: ‘They saw their day’s work, and behold, it was not of the best; it had to be blotted out!’

That is the great disappointment of the luciferic spirits; they are always trying to do their work over again, always trying to swing the pendulum again to the other side, and always they find their work again destroyed by Ahriman. You must think of it as an ebb

and flow in the tide of human evolution, a continuous rousing of new forces by beings who are higher than we are ourselves, and the experiencing by them of continual disappointments. That comes into the experience of the luciferic spirits in the earth-evolution. Man had to take up this karma into himself, because only thus could he attain to real freedom which can develop only when man himself gives the highest purpose to his earth Ego. That Ego which man would have had, if at the end of the earth-evolution all goals were given to him, could not in a true sense be free; for from the beginning it was predestined that all the good of the earth-evolution should flow into him. Man could only become free, by adding to the Ego another Ego which is capable of error, which is always swinging backwards and forwards between good and evil, and which still is able to strive again and again after that which is the purpose of the earth-evolution. The lower Ego had to be joined to man through Lucifer, so that the upward struggle of man to the higher Ego should be his own deed. Only thus is ‘free will’ possible to mankind. Free will is something which man may acquire gradually, for he is so situated, that in his life, free will floats before him as an ideal. Does there exist a movement in human evolution when the human will is free? It is never free, because at any moment it may succumb to the luciferic and ahrimanic

element; it is not free because every man, when he has passed through the gates of death, in the ascending time of purification — perhaps during several decades — has impressions which are definite and determined. It is the essential part of kamaloca that we should see to what an extent we are still imperfect by reason of our failings in the world, that we should see in detail in what way we have become imperfect. From that issues the decision to reject everything which has made us imperfect. Thus life in kamaloca adds one intention to another, and the conclusion that we make good again everything that we did and thought which lowered us. What we then feel is imprinted into our further life and we enter into existence through birth with that decision and intention thus charged with our own karma. Therefore we cannot speak of free will when we have entered into existence through birth. We can say we are approaching nearer to ‘free will,’ only when we have succeeded in mastering the influences of Lucifer and Ahriman, and we can obtain the mastery over the luciferic and ahrimanic influences, only by means of knowledge. Firstly, through self-knowledge, we make ourselves more and more capable — even in the life between birth and death — of learning to know our weaknesses in all three departments of the soul, in Thought, Feeling and Will. If we constantly strive to

yield to no illusion, then that strength grows within our Ego by means of which we are able to resist the luciferic influence; for then we shall realise more and more how much those treasures of mankind are really worth. Secondly, we can obtain this mastery by means of the knowledge of the external world, which must be supplemented by self-knowledge — both must work together. We must unite self-knowledge and the knowledge of the external world with our own being and then we shall be quite clear as to how we stand regarding Lucifer.

It is characteristic of Anthroposophy that through it we are able to throw light upon these questions how far inclinations and emotions, and how far Lucifer and Ahriman play into every human action. What have we done in this course of lectures other than to explain in how many different ways the luciferic and ahrimanic forces work in our lives! In our present age, enlightenment as to the luciferic and ahrimanic forces may begin, and man must be enlightened regarding these if he really wishes to contribute something towards the attainment of the goal of earthly humanity. If you look around you, everywhere where human feeling and human thinking exist, you can see how far removed men still are from a really true enlightenment of the influences of Lucifer and

Ahriman and you will find that by far the greater number of people do not wish for such enlightenment. You will see a great part of mankind succumbing to a certain religious egotism, and being overcome by the feeling that above all they should in their own souls attain the greatest degree of well-being. This egotism is such that people are not in the least conscious that the strongest passions may play a part in it. Nowhere does Lucifer play a greater part than when people, driven by their emotions and desires, strive to ascend to the Divine without having had the Divine illuminated by the light of knowledge. Do you not think that Lucifer is frequently involved where people believe they are striving for the highest? But the forms which are striven for in this way will also belong to the disenchantments of Lucifer, and those people whose erroneous desires cause them to believe that they are able to receive this or that form of spiritual culture, who preach over and over again that this Anthroposophy is so bad because it believes in something new, ought to reflect that it does not depend upon human will that Ahriman fastens himself to the heels of Lucifer. That which came about in the course of evolution in the forms of religion will, because Ahriman mingles into them, go under again through Lucifer. The continuous stream of human evolution will alone be preserved.

In a preceding evolution as we know, certain beings sacrificed themselves by retarded development. These beings live out their karma for our sake, so that we may in a normal way express what these beings can bestow on us. Indeed Jehovah originally poured into mankind by means of the Divine Breath, the capacity for absorbing the Ego. If only that Divine Breath had entered which pulsates in the human blood, without that which leads us away from it; if in fact the luciferic as well as the ahrimanic impulse were not at work, man would, it is true, have been able to attain to the actual gift of Jehovah, but he would not have perceived it with a self-conscious freedom.

Today we may indeed look back upon many disappointments of Lucifer, but we can also look forward to a future in which we may learn more and more to understand what the real current of evolution is. Anthroposophy will be the instrument for the understanding of this and will help us to be more conscious of the influences of Lucifer, more able to recognise it within ourselves, and therefore more able to make good use of it consciously; for formerly it worked but as a dim impulse. The same applies of course to ahrimanic influences.

In this regard I may perhaps call attention to the fact that an important period of human evolution is before us, an age in which soul-forces are reversed. It is an age in which certain persons — very few — will develop capacities different from those recognised to-day. For example, the etheric body of man, besides the physical body can be seen only by those who have undergone a methodical training. But even before the middle of the twentieth century there will be people possessed of a natural etheric clairvoyance, who, since mankind has reached the epoch in which this will develop as a natural gift, will perceive the etheric body as permeating the physical body and extending beyond it. Just as man, once able to see into the spiritual world, has descended to the merely physical perception and intellectual comprehension of the external world, so he begins gradually to evolve new and conscious capacities which will be added to the old ones. One of these new capacities I should like to characterise.

There will be people — at first only a few, for only in the course of the next two or three thousand years will these capacities evolve in larger numbers, and these first forerunners will be born before the end of the first half of the twentieth century — who will have an experience something like the following. After taking

part in some action they will withdraw from it, and will have before them a picture which arises from the act in question. At first, they will not recognise it; they will not find in it any relation to what they have done. In the end they will see that this picture, which appears to them as a sort of conscious dream-picture, is the counterpart of their own action; it is the picture of the action which must take place, in order that the karmic compensation of the previous action may be brought about.

Thus we are approaching an age in which men will begin to understand karma not only from the teachings and presentations of Spiritual Science, but in which they will begin actually to see karma. Whereas until now karma was to man an obscure impulse, an obscure desire, which could be fulfilled only in the following life, which could only between death and a new birth be transformed into an intention, man will gradually evolve to a conscious perception of the work of Lucifer and its effect. Certainly only those will have this power of etheric clairvoyance who have striven after knowledge and self-knowledge. But even in normal circumstances men will have more and more before them the karmic pictures of their actions. That will carry them on further and further, because they will see what they

still owe to the world — what is on the debit side of their karma. What prevents us from being free is that we do not know what we still owe and so we cannot really speak of free will in connection with karma. The expression ‘free will’ itself is incorrect, for man only becomes free through ever-increasing knowledge, through rising higher and higher and growing more and more into the spiritual world. By so doing he fills himself with the contents of the spiritual world, and becomes in greater degree the director of his own will. It is not the will which becomes free, but man who permeates himself with what he can know and see in the spiritualised domain of the world.

Thus do we look upon the deeds and the disappointments of Lucifer and say: In this way, thousands of years ago, the foundations were laid for that on which we stand; for if we did not stand upon those foundations, we should not be able to evolve to freedom. But after we have enlightened ourselves about Lucifer and Ahriman, we can gain a different relation to these powers; we can gather the fruits of what they have done; we can, as it were, take over the work of Lucifer and Ahriman. Then, however, the acts of which Lucifer is the author, and which have always led to disillusions must be transformed into their opposite when they are performed by us. The deeds of

Lucifer necessarily roused desires, and led man into that which could result in evil. If we ourselves are to counteract Lucifer, if we are to regulate his affairs in the future, it will only be the love in us which can take the place of the acts of Lucifer: but love will be able to do it.

In the same way when we gradually remove the darkness which we interweave into external substance so that we completely overcome the ahrimanic influence we shall recognise the world as it really is. We shall penetrate to that of which matter really consists — to the nature of Light. At the present day science itself is subject to manifold deceptions as to the nature of light. Many of us believe that we see light with our physical eyes. That is not correct. We do not see light, but only illuminated bodies. We do not see light, but we see through light. All such deceptions will be swept away so that the picture of the world will be transformed; for necessarily under the influence of Ahriman it was interwoven with error, but hence-forward it will be permeated with wisdom. Man, in pressing forward towards the light will himself develop the psychic counterpart of light — which is wisdom.

By this means Love and Wisdom will enter the human soul. Love and Wisdom will become the practical force, the vital impulse which results from Anthroposophy. Wisdom which is the inner counter-part of Light, Wisdom which can unite with Love, and Love when it is permeated with Wisdom; these two will lead us to the understanding of what at present is immersed in external wisdom. If we are to partake in the other side of evolution, and to overcome Lucifer and Ahriman, we must permeate ourselves with Wisdom and Love, for these elements will flow from our own souls as our offering to those who as the luciferic and ahrimanic powers in the first half of the evolution sacrificed themselves to give us what we needed for the attainment of our freedom. But it is indispensable that we should be aware of the following: Because evolution must be, we must accept the civilisations that are the expression of it. We shall gladly and lovingly devote ourselves to an Anthroposophical culture which will not be eternal — nevertheless we shall accept it with enthusiasm, and we shall create with love what was before created under the influence of Lucifer; we shall, too, develop within ourselves a superabundance of love, without which culture after culture could not be developed. We shall not be under the delusion that everything will last for ever, for by our attitude we shall counter-

balance Lucifer’s disappointments; we repay to Lucifer consciously the services he has done us and by this repayment we redeem him.

That is the other side of the karma of higher beings, that we develop a love which does not remain in mankind alone, but penetrates right into the cosmos. Love will stream into beings who are higher than we are and they will feel it as a sacrifice. This sacrifice will rise to those who once poured their gifts upon us; just as in early days the smoke of sacrifice ascended to the Spirits, when men still had spiritual possessions. At that time men were only able to send up the symbolical smoke of sacrifice, but in the future they will send up streams of love, and out of the sacrifice higher forces will pour down to men which will work, with ever increasing power, in our physical world as forces guided from the spiritual world. Those will be magical forces in the true sense.

Thus human evolution is the working out of human karma and the karma of higher beings. The whole plan of evolution is connected with individual karma. If a higher being or superhuman individuality in the year 1910 did this or that which was carried out on the physical plane by a human being, a contact is established between them. The person is then

interwoven into the karma of the higher beings and human karma is fructified by the universal karma of the world.

Consider Miltiades, or some important personality, who played a part in the history of his nation. This part was necessary to the karma of the higher powers and so each man is placed at his post. Into the individual karma is poured part of the karma of humanity which then becomes his own karma as soon as he performs some action connected with it. Thus do we also live and weave into the macrocosm the individual karma of a microcosm.

We have now reached the end of this course of lectures, although not the end of the subject. But that cannot be helped. I may just add a few words more, namely, that I have given this course of lectures on those very human questions which are able to stir the human heart so deeply, and which again are connected with the greatest destiny, even of the higher beings. When I say that I have given this course really from the depths of my soul and am happy that it was possible for once to speak of these things in an anthroposophical circle, among anthroposophical friends, who have come here from all directions in order to devote themselves to these

considerations, these words come from the bottom of my heart. Those who will have the opportunity of hearing further courses, will see that much will be answered of what someone may have in his soul in connection with this course. But those also who will not be able to hear the summer courses, will later have the opportunity to discuss something of the sort with me. And so I may again say on this occasion that I have endeavoured to speak of the things which have been discussed in such a way that they should not be mere abstract knowledge, but so that they should pass over into our thought, feeling and will, into our whole life, so that one should be able to see in the Anthroposophists who are out in the world a likeness and picture of that which we may call the deepest Anthroposophical truths. Let us endeavour to bring ourselves completely to this, for only then shall we have an Anthroposophical movement which in our small circle exists for the study of spiritual knowledge. Then, however, this knowledge must — first of all in the circle of our members — become life and soul to us, and as such pass over into the world. And the world will gradually see that it was not in vain that at the turning-point of the twentieth century there were honest and upright Anthroposophists — people who honestly and straightforwardly believed in the might of the spiritual powers. And when they themselves

believed in it, they became filled with the force with which to work for it. Faster and faster will civilisation proceed in our lives, if we within ourselves transform that which we hear into life, into action and into deeds — and not by trying to convince other people. The present age is not yet ready for that. Those only will be convinced who come to Anthroposophy out of the deepest impulse of their hearts; the remainder will not be convinced. We have karma in the mental sphere too, it was something called forth by materialism; and we must look upon these defects as that against which Anthroposophy must show itself to be a spiritual power.

Therefore that which we have to give to the world must be given out of the conviction that it is the most important thing. Each one who has transformed Anthroposophy into an inner force of his soul will be a spiritual source of strength. And whosoever will believe in the super-sensible may be absolutely convinced that our Anthroposophical knowledge and convictions work in a spiritual way, that is to say, they spread invisibly into the world if we make ourselves truly into a conscious instrument, filled with the life of Anthroposophy.